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* Slightly Abridged.

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VARIETY LANE

BY

E. V. LUCAS

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PREFACE

THIS volume has been made of selections from three recent books, *A Wanderer in Venice*, *Landmarks*, and *Loiterer's Harvest*, and two older books, *Anne's Terrible Good Nature* and *Willow and Leather*. It also contains a number of essays and sketches now published for the first time from *Punch*, New York *Life*, the *Standard*, and the *Star*.

E. V. L.

Spring 1916.

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VARIETY LANE

HOUSEHOLD GODS

MOST dogs, though they are prompt to investigate new acquaintances and like an excursion with their kind now and then, are happiest with their masters; and this, I am sure, is not cupboard love either. It is pleasure in the human relation. What they understand of our language is little, but what they understand of our tones is much. They instantly respond, so sensitive are they to vocal inflections, and can be affected by murmurs better than by words. This sensitiveness, especially to sounds of reproach or disapproval, sometimes tempts people to take liberties with a dog's feelings. That is a mistake, and one for which, since all dogs must die, and most of our dogs die before we do, we can be very sorry. Indeed, the brevity of a dog's life is not the least sad anomaly in a world where sadness is no curiosity.

I have of late been thinking of this brevity with renewed seriousness; for as I approached my home the other day, after an absence of three weeks, I saw my dog in the distance, across a meadow, and whistled to him. He heard me whistle and, to my surprise, after standing still for a moment or so, wonderingly, he came toward me not with his usual swift directness, but uncertainly. He was still doubtful and strange until within a yard or so, when the recognition was complete and he began those whole-souled expressions of delight

and satisfaction which none of us deserve. And then, stooping down, I realized what his hesitations had meant: for, to my great grief, I saw that a purple mist covered the middle of each eye. He was losing his sight.

This dog is a black spaniel, seven years old, and I have had him since he was a puppy; and not till now had the knowledge that he was ageing come upon me. But now I know that, like all his kind, he has had his day. He will grow blinder and blinder, and that will make him snappy and unsafe, and one morning I shall have to send for the vet to administer a merciful lethal drug.

In any properly organized world the span of man and dog would coincide; and particularly so in this world, where loyalty among human creatures is not too easy to find, and moods among men and women are so common and embarrassing, and where so much mischief is done by talk. The dog, being always faithful, and always the same, and always dumb, is the perfect companion; and a dog's life is so short. One cannot count on more than five or six years of a dog at his best—or I would rather say at her best, for bitches are my favourites, especially spaniels; and in these days of motor-cars one cannot, of course, count on anything at all. Let me, however, not be unjust even to 'oil cans,' as sarcastic drivers of horse cabs call the taxis which perplex and beat them. My last dog to die—a very perfect lady from Pekin—after having, by a series of miracles so frequent and so amazing as to convince us of her immortality, escaped a thousand automobiles, met her death at the wheel of a plodding baker's cart, innocent alike of speed or sudden evolutions. Fate had so willed it.

This lady was small, but of the superb gallantry of

her kind, swift, impulsive, ever gay and ever loving. She was not more than three years old when she died thus paradoxically by way of the staff of life, but already, thanks to the wise and thoughtful decrees of Nature, she had stamped her image on as adorable a family of little beautiful uglies as you ever saw, one of whom, the very spit of her mother, is at the moment wondering when I shall return to the armchair in order to make again a lap. So that, though it is hard that dogs should so quickly pass through the lighted hall between darkness and darkness, yet there is ever another left: not, of course, the same, for nothing is the same, but like enough in devout ways and trustworthiness of habits to console us in some measure. And now and again, of course, it may chance that the new dog is the better.

As for Shadow, my black spaniel now under sentence, he has never been anything but blunderingly devoted. As a dog he is not clever. To be pursued by him means, for a rabbit, everlasting life, and, for a cat, a joke of enormous dimensions. In the wake of a hare, fast diminishing to a speck on the horizon, he is pathetic indeed; for it is hours before he will give up the chase. Yet as a companion he has been close, and constant, and untroubled by complexities of temperament, and I shall miss him intensely. He lies beside me as I write these words. When I get up he will get up too. When I go to London he will spend the time listening for my returning footstep.

Is there any harm in that? It is doing me too much honour, of course; but is there any harm in it? I never thought so until in an article in one of the half-crown reviews, I found recently Mr. W. H. Hudson saying of dogs that he cannot bring himself to keep one, because he dislikes to see 'so intelligent and service-

able a beast degraded to the position of a mere pet or plaything.' With enormous respect and admiration for Mr. Hudson, I am bound to say that I think he ought to know better. When I recall certain of his beautiful writings—his *Purple Land*, for example, and his *Shepherd's Life*, and all their sympathy with nature and understanding of man and pity for him—I am bewildered to find him thus depriving himself of what would be to him so congenial a companion. For even if we grant this point, which I do not, that the dog ' has lost, or been robbed of, its true place in the scheme of things,' is that any reason why a new place as the happy associate of man should not be found for him?

There is the dog's point of view to be considered, too. A dog can find even in the most worthless of us —Bill Sikes jumps to mind—something to love and believe in. Life is not such a triumphant progress for any of us that (on our side) hero-worshippers are to be discouraged; while, on the other side, the hero-worshippers, especially those who have no discrimination, nothing but ecstasy, are among the happiest of creatures. Let them enjoy their day!

The cat-lover is a more exotic type than the dog-lover. There is something obvious about the dog which can be reflected in its master; something remote and strange in a cat which similarly is suggested in its human adorer. Mr. William Watson once wrote an excellent poem in which a cat and a dog personified East and West, Oriental and Occidental, and the distinction holds.

A cat's loyalty (such as it is) is to the hand that spoils it; the dog's to the hand that controls it. To love both cats and dogs with an equal intensity is practically impossible. There must be a preference for one or the other, and thus is mankind divided.

One of the reasons why we like dogs is that dogs are so ready to like us. To like to be liked is very human, and dogs supply this pleasant feeling. But cats have to be wooed, and even then their response is slow, and you cannot, except in rare instances, count upon it at all, and you can never count upon it for certain. To many of us who have not much patience the cat's death warrant as pet is there explicit. Knowing too well that there is not too much time, we turn to the more facile or less exacting, though deeply faithful, dog.

There are, of course, still other and even weightier reasons why dogs are preferred to cats. Some of us do not want to be reminded in season and out of the redness of Nature in tooth and claw. The dog mercifully slurs over this fact, but the cat underlines it. At any moment the most angelic of her tribe (notice how naturally one says 'her') may enter the room with a still struggling bird or a mouse, and with the expression of a saint torture it to death on the carpet. Dogs do not obtrude their taking of life; and many of them of course never kill at all. As for the others, for the most part they are trained to kill by man, and at any rate they like the quarry to have some sort of run for its money.

To tell the blunt truth, the cat has to be loved more for its failings than its virtues. It is never heroic, except, occasionally, as a mother; it has no sense of responsibility, as a dog has; it protects nothing but itself. Hence in a way the cat-lovers are a finer type than the dog-lovers, because they are getting nothing back. Their love is disinterested. The cat will never save their life, never refuse to leave their coffin, never do any of the picturesque things in the books. On the contrary, it may steal their baby's breath.

I have owned many cats—or, to be more precise, I have lived in houses in which a number of cats have from time to time consented to eat, drink, and sleep—and I have had agreeable passages of flirtation with all. But I have never felt any security in their affections, nor expected any return for my endearments. Fondling has been its own reward and all that I asked.

On the other hand, I will admit to feeling exceedingly proud when any cat has singled me out for notice; for, of course, every cat is really the most beautiful woman in the room. That is part of their deadly fascination.

The best cat I ever had any share in—and by this I mean the cat that showed me most attention—illustrates the detachment of the creature; the unbridgeable gulf always fixed between it and man, the sense of insecurity which it engenders. It was a blue Persian, and it entered the front door one day, remained for a few months, during which it enslaved the household, and then as suddenly walked out and was never heard of again. Of such is the nature of the cat. Caprice is its essence, and its thoughts are always elsewhere. Its beautiful body may be on your lap, but its soul is busy with nocturnal pacts and cruelties. No one ever said, 'The more I see of men the more I like cats.'

At the present moment the only cat I possess is of bronze and comes from Egypt, and was fashioned 2000 years B.C. It resides on the mantelpiece, and I often stand by it when waiting for meals and think of all that has changed since it was made. If it could reply, I should ask it if the world were not, comparatively speaking, a very Christian place in those days.

THE WORLD'S DESIRE

I HAVE been reading the terms of the agreement which Charlie Chaplin refused in New York early in 1916. I bound a wet towel round my head and studied its figures as dispassionately as it is possible to study figures when they run into kings' ransoms. Charlie was offered ten thousand dollars a week for a year: which comes to £104,000. He was offered one hundred thousand dollars as a bonus for signing the agreement: which is £20,000. He was also offered 50 per cent of any profits made by his films after his salary had been paid. But it did not satisfy him.

Now here is a most remarkable state of affairs—that the popular demand for laughter is such that a little acrobatic man with splay feet and a funny way with a cigarette, a hat, and a cane can be offered and refuse such colossal wealth as that: for no other services than to clown it for the cinematoscope. And the oddity of the matter is not decreased by the reflection that these figures, which make an ordinary person dizzy, belong to war-time. Charlie Chaplin's rise to affluence and power coincided with the bloodiest war in history.

If it is needful for so many people to hold their sides, Charlie's career is justified. He is also the first droll to conquer the whole world. I suppose that it is no exaggeration to say that at any moment of the day and night—allowing for divergences of time—it would be safe to maintain that ten million people are laughing at the Chaplin antics somewhere or other on this planet of ours. For wherever there is a township of more than two thousand inhabitants, there, I imagine, is a cinema; and wherever there is a cinema there is Charlie; not

always quite up to date, of course, for managers are wily birds, but in some film, even though an ancient one. Does the Funniest Man on Earth, as he is called, I should like to know, realize what a rôle he fills ? Does he stand before the glass and search the recesses of his face—which is now far more familiar to the world than any other, even that of the Kaiser, who will one day, I am confident, be the Saddest Man on Earth—and marvel ?

Charlie, by the way, has his private uses too. During a recent visit from a young friend, I found that the ordinary gulf that is fixed between a boy in the neighbourhood of ten and a man in the neighbourhood of five times that number was for once easily bridgeable. We found common ground, and very wisely stuck to it, in the circumstance that each of us had seen Charlie, and, by great good fortune, we had each seen him in his latest sketch. Whenever, therefore, a *longueur* threatened, I had but to mention another aspect of Charlie's genius, and in the discussion that followed all was well.

That Charlie is funny is beyond question. I will swear to that. His humour is of such elemental variety that he could, and probably does, make a Tierra del Fuegan or a Bushman of Central Australia laugh not much less than our sophistical selves. One needs no civilized culture to appreciate the fun of the harlequinade, and to that has Charlie, with true instinct, returned. But it is the harlequinade accelerated, intensified, toned up for the exacting taste of the great and growing 'picture' public. It is also farce at its busiest, most furious. Charlie has brought back that admirable form of humour which does not disdain the co-operation of fisticuffs, and in which, by way of variety, one man is aimed at, and another, too intru-

sive, is hit. However long the world may last, it is safe to say that the spectacle of one man receiving a blow meant for another will ever be popular.

What strikes one quickly is the realization of how much harder Charlie works than any other of the more illustrious filmers. He is rarely out of the picture, he is rarely still, and he gives full measure. There is no physical indignity that he does not suffer—and inflict. Such impartiality is rare in drama, where usually men are either on top or underneath. In the ordinary way our pet comedians must be on top and untouched—as, for example, Mr. George Graves with his serenely conquering tongue. Even the clown, though he receives punishment *en route*, eventually triumphs. But Charlie Chaplin seldom wins. He remains a butt, or, at any rate, a victim of circumstances whom nothing can discourage or deter. His very essence is resiliency under difficulties, an unabashed and undefeatable front. His especial fascination to me is that life finds him always ready for it—not because he is armed by sagacity, but because he is even better armed by folly. He is first cousin to the village idiot, a natural child of nonsense, licensed up to the hilt, and, like Antæus, every time he rises from a knockdown blow he is the stronger.

It is a proof of the charter which the world has handed to this irresistible humorist that he has been permitted to introduce such an innovation in stage manners as the hitting of women. We only laugh the more when having had his ears boxed by the fair he retaliates with double strength. And there is one of his plays in which every audience becomes practically helpless, as after with great difficulty extricating a lady in evening dress from a fountain, he takes offence and pushes her in again. It required a Charlie Chaplin

to make this tolerable; but such is his radiant unworldliness that we accept it as quite legitimate fun.

One of the chief causes—after the personality of the protagonist—of the popularity of the Chaplin films is probably that in them certain things happen which cannot happen in real life without the intervention of the law, and which are almost always withheld from the real stage. I mean that men so freely assault each other: physical violence has the fullest and most abundant play. We all long to see kicks and blows administered, but we are usually defrauded; and Charlie is a spendthrift with both. And so cheerfully and victoriously does he distribute them that I wonder an epidemic of such attentions has not broken out in both hemispheres. I know this—that a fat policeman with his back towards the exit of a cinema at the time a Chaplin film had ended would be in great danger from my foot, were I then leaving. I should hope for enough self-control; but I could promise nothing, and I should feel Charlie's example behind the action, sanctifying it. Film life and real life would merge into each other so naturally that if the policeman repaid me—or attempted to—in any other way but kind, I should feel outraged. To be arrested for it would be like a stab in the back from a friend.

How long Charlie will remain the darling of two hemispheres we must wait to see. But of one thing I am certain, and that is that if at any time the Funniest Man on Earth ceases to compel laughter, he might by slightly changing his methods draw tears. For while he can be as diverting as the greatest glutton for mirth desires, he has all the machinery of dejection too. One of his melancholy smiles is really beautiful.

THE NEWNESS OF THE OLD

IN an American paper which has just reached me I find this anecdote:

> 'An old lady was being shown the spot on which a hero fell. "I don't wonder," she replied. "It 's so slippery I nearly fell there myself."'

Now that story, which is very old in England, and is familiar here to most adult persons, is usually told of Nelson and the *Victory*. Indeed it is such a commonplace with facetious visitors to that vessel that the wiser of the guides are at pains to get in with it first. But in America it may be fresh and beginning a new lease of life, and it will probably go on for ever in all English-speaking countries, on each occasion of its recrudescence finding a few people to whom it is new.

It is a problem why we tend to be so resentful when an editor or a comedian offers us a jest that has done service before. It is, I suppose, in part at any rate, because we have paid our money, either for the paper or the seat, and we experience the sense of having been defrauded. We have been done, we feel, because the bargain, as we understood it, was that we were purchasing novelty. So that when suddenly an old, old jape, which perhaps we have ourselves related—and that of course is an aggravation of the grievance—confronts us, we are indignant. But what, one wonders, would a comic paper or a revue be like that had nothing old in it. We shall never know.

The odd thing is that we not only resent the age of the joke, even though it is in our own repertory, but we resent the laughter of those to whom it is new—perhaps three-quarters of the audience. How dare they also not have heard it before? is our unspoken question.

Not long ago, seated in a playhouse beside a candid and normally benignant and tolerant friend, I found myself laughing at what struck me as a distinctly humorous remark made by one of London's nonsensical funny men. Engaged in a competition with another as to which had the longer memory, he clinched the discussion by saying that he personally could remember London Bridge when it was a cornfield. To me that was as new as it was idiotic, and I behaved accordingly; but my friend was furious with me. 'Good heavens!' he exclaimed with the click of the tongue that usually accompanies such criticism, 'fancy digging that up again! It 's as old as the hills.' And his face grew so dark and stern that I felt guilty.

What we have to remember, and what might have softened my friend's granite anger had he remembered it, is that a new audience is always coming along to whom nothing is a chestnut. It is not the most reassuring of thoughts to those who are a little fastidious about ancientry in humour; but it is nature and therefore a fact. Just as every moment (so I used to be told by a solemn nurse) a child is born (she added also that every moment some one dies, and she used to hold up her finger and hush! for me to realize that happy thought), so nearly every moment (allowing for a certain amount of infant mortality) an older child attains an age when it can understand and relish a funny story. To those children every story is original. With this new public, clamorous and appreciative, why do humorists try so hard to be novel? (But perhaps they don't.)

I suppose that there are theories as to what is the oldest story, but I am not acquainted with them. That people are, however, quite prepared for every story to be old is proved by the readiness with which, when Mark Twain's *Jumping Frog* was translated into Greek

for a School Reader, a number of persons remarked upon the circumstance that the humorist had gone to ancient literature for his jest. For by a curious twist we are all anxious that stories should not be new. Much as we like a new story, we like better to be able to say that to us it is not new.

Some old stories come into their own again quite naturally. Such, for example just now, as those with a martial background. I remember during the Boer War hearing of a young man who was endeavouring to enlist, and was rejected because his teeth were defective. 'But I want to fight the Boers,' he said, 'not eat them.' The other day this excellent retort turned up again, only this time the young man said that he did not want to eat the Germans. I have no doubt that in the Crimean War a similar applicant declared that he did not want to eat the Russians, and a hundred years ago another was vowing that he did not want to eat the French. Probably one could trace it through every war that ever was. Probably a young Hittite with indifferent teeth proclaimed that his desire was to fight the Amalekites and not to eat them. The story was equally good each time; and there has always been a vast new audience for it. And so long as teeth exist in the human head, which I am told will not be for ever, so long will this anecdote enjoy popularity. After that it will enter upon a new phase of existence based upon defects in the applicant's râtelier, and so on until universal peace descends upon the world, or, the sun turning cold, life ceases.

THE NICE GARDENER[1]

UNCLE HECTOR having been made governor of a prison, the Sergisons paid him a week-end visit in his new quarters.

The prison was on a hill on the edge of a county town. It had very high walls all round it, with spikes on the top, and a gloomy gateway with iron-studded doors which opened only to allow the prison van to rumble through, bringing new prisoners; but Uncle Hector's own quarters were comfortable and cheerful enough, and his garden was gay and pretty, with a croquet lawn and a summer house.

When Rudd heard that he was going on a visit to so terrible a place as a prison he was frightened and unwilling; but curiosity and excitement combined to conquer this reluctance. Still, he shuddered when he was alone and thought of all the bad men kept there. Supposing one should get out and break into the governor's room for revenge. . . .

'I 'm sure you 'd like to go through the prison with me,' Uncle Hector said.

But Rudd shrank from the idea. He had a horror of bad people. It was uncomfortable enough to be so near them as this; he did not want to see their wicked faces.

'An empty cell,' said Uncle Hector—'wouldn't you like to see that?'

But Rudd shrank from that too.

After lunch he was thrown on his own resources, and he would have found the time a little heavy but for Uncle Hector's garden, to which he took an old volume of *Punch*.

[1] From *Landmarks*.

He had not long been reading, or rather looking at the pictures, when the gardener came in with a can and began to water the flowers.

He was a strong, stout man with a short grey beard. He glanced at Rudd now and then and smiled. Rudd found himself looking at the gardener oftener that at *Punch*.

Gradually the watering brought the gardener close to Rudd's seat. 'Hullo, sonny!' he said.

'Hullo!' said Rudd.

'What do you think of life?' the gardener asked.

Rudd had never thought of life, so he merely smiled perplexedly.

'A rum business, isn't it?' said the gardener.

'Is it?' Rudd asked.

'Not to you—yet,' said the gardener. 'Tell me, sonny, you do pretty much as you like, I suppose? Go where you will, with your hands in your pockets, don't you?'

Rudd acquiesced.

'Tell me what it feels like to do as you like,' said the gardener. 'Whew!' he whistled, 'but I must get on with my work.'

The next time he came round the gardener asked Rudd where he lived, and when Rudd said at Caston he wanted to know if the sea there was still wet and blue, as it used to be a thousand years ago.

'How do you know what it was like a thousand years ago?' Rudd asked, and the gardener said that he could not explain it, but he did.

When Rudd asked him where he lived, the gardener said he was a guest of the Queen, who was a very hospitable lady and liked him so much that she couldn't bear to let him go.

'But I thought the Queen lived in London,' Rudd said.

'She does,' said the gardener, 'but she has a number of palaces—or, as you might say, hotels—for her guests, in other parts of the country.'

'Is she very nice?' Rudd asked.

'Very,' said the gardener. 'God save the Queen!' and he laughed.

'Is that *Punch*?' he added, looking at Rudd's book. 'Does it still come out? Fancy seeing *Punch* again!'

'Of course it comes out,' said Rudd. 'Father gets it every week. You can buy it at the station. I saw some there.'

'I'm not much of one to go to the station,' said the gardener. 'I haven't been out of this place for years.'

'Years!' exclaimed Rudd in astonishment. 'Not in the evening?'

'No,' said the gardener.

'Not on Sundays?' Rudd asked.

'No,' said the gardener.

'The Queen must be very fond of you,' said Rudd, 'if she won't even let you go into the town.'

'She is,' said the gardener. 'She says, "Now we've really got him we must take the greatest possible care of him." And she does.'

Rudd pondered deeply, but it was all too mysterious for him. Still, he found the conversation absorbingly interesting.

Having been asked his name, and told it, Rudd asked the gardener to tell him his.

'I haven't got one,' said the gardener, 'I've lost it. The Queen is very funny about names—she doesn't like them. So she gives all her guests numbers instead. My number is 231.'

'How long will you stay with her?' Rudd asked,

and the gardener said that he didn't quite know, but he thought for another eighteen months.

'And then where will you go?' Rudd asked, and was astonished at the strange smile which came into the gardener's face.

'Where shall I go?' he said. 'Ah, where shan't I go? But first of all to London.'

'Yes,' said Rudd, 'that is where I should go first.'

'That 's right,' said the gardener. 'There 's nothing like it. You can be quiet there.'

Quiet! thought Rudd. He didn't want to be quiet. 'But I should want to see things,' he said, 'when I went to London. The Zoo and the Tower and Piccadilly Circus. I love circuses. Wouldn't you?'

The gardener shook his grey head.

'What would you do first?' Rudd asked.

'First?' he said. 'First I should go to a restaurant I know of, for—what do you think?'

'A pork pie,' said Rudd.

'No,' said the gardener, 'for some saddle of mutton with red currant jelly and a bottle of claret; then some Stilton cheese and a glass of port; and then a cigar. After that I have no plans.'

Rudd thought he was the funniest person he had ever met. Fancy thinking like that about mutton, that horrid stuff.

'Where are you going to garden when you leave the Queen?' Rudd asked. 'We keep a gardener,' he added. 'I wish you 'd come to us. Do.'

'I don't know,' said 231, 'whether I won't give up gardening. I haven't decided yet. Perhaps I shall have a gardener of my own.'

This was an enormous idea to Rudd. A gardener keep a gardener! His eyes grew very wide.

'You 'd want to be rather rich, wouldn't you?' he said.

'I hope to be,' said 231; 'don't you?'

'I am,' said Rudd simply, 'I 've got nearly two pounds. I had a sovereign when I was born.'

The gardener asked Rudd what he was going to be when he grew up, and Rudd said he hadn't decided yet, but most probably either a railway guard or a lamplighter. 'I suppose you 've always been a gardener,' he added.

'I 've been all kinds of things,' said 231. 'In fact, gardening came late in life. I 've even been a traveller,' and he told Rudd curious and fascinating stories about foreign lands: and what Sydney Harbour was like, and how San Francisco looked from the sea, and how strange the China Town there was, and about flying-fishes and whales, until Rudd realized that, as a lamplighter, to carry a long pole with a light at the end, or, as a guard, to jump on a train after it had started, was not all. Travel was the thing. Long voyages. And what a travelling companion was this delightful man!

And when Rudd fell over a croquet hoop and made his nose bleed, the gardener was very kind to him, and took him to his shed and bathed his face and put a cold key down his back. Altogether Rudd thought him the nicest casual acquaintance he had ever met.

When he went in to tea and was asked how he had been spending the time, Rudd said that he had been talking to the gardener.

'I 'm afraid,' said Uncle Hector, laughing, 'that Rudd has fallen into bad company.'

Rudd looked up with a start.

'As a matter of fact,' Uncle Hector continued, 'my garden at the moment is being attended to by a notorious criminal, no less a person than the famous Tyser, the swindler, himself.'

'Not the scoundrel who ruined all those small investors?' said Mr. Sergison.

'The very man,' said Uncle Hector.

Rudd's face went scarlet. His blood surged.

'But he told me he was staying with the Queen,' he said. 'Surely she wouldn't have swindlers to stay with her?'

Uncle Hector laughed. 'He's a very amusing fellow,' he said; 'he meant that he is a prisoner.'

Rudd's head swam. His nice gardener a swindler and a prisoner. A notorious criminal. But how then could he be nice? Surely prisoners were gloomy men with sullen faces? How could they be amusing and friendly? They were wicked. Rudd was puzzled and silent all the evening.

When his mother came to say good night he put the case to her. 'If 231 wasn't really wicked he would not be in prison, would he?'

'No,' she said. The nuances of right and wrong: the mingled skein of character: the shades of grey between the black and the white: how could she explain these to a child? Better say nothing.

'But if he was really wicked how could he laugh and be so kind and so jolly?'

'Perhaps,' said Mrs. Sergison, with an inspiration, 'he is sorry and has repented, and is now beginning to feel happy again. Just like you after you have been punished and forgiven.'

'Then they ought to let him free,' said Rudd. 'Shouldn't they?'

Mrs. Sergison here chose the better part of valour and urged Rudd to go to sleep.

'Shouldn't they?' Rudd repeated.

'It's for the judges and wise people to decide,' said Mrs. Sergison, 'not for us,' and kissed him good night.

Rudd puzzled over it for a long time. To be so wicked—a ruiner of families, his father had said—and so nice. To be so nice and so wicked. To be so kind and a prisoner. To be a prisoner and so kind.—Thus his thoughts ran until he slept.

He was not altogether sorry the next day that it was Sunday and there was no garden work to be done; and on the Monday morning they went home again.

And yet he wished too that he could see the gardener once more. He wanted to examine his face in a new way. He had been so kind and had smiled so gaily. Was it all put on? And to be so near one who, whatever his present state of virtue, had once been that terrible thing, a notorious criminal, a swindler, a ruiner of families—that would be frightfully exciting.

But all the fun would have gone—of that Rudd was indistinctly sure.

A CHOP HOUSE

ONE does not talk about London as a place in which to eat, as one talks of Paris. It is true that every day during the past decade, until the war came with all its implacable dislocations, more people acquired the habit of eating away from home, and more restaurants were planned to accommodate them; but nevertheless cookery is not a London triumph. We eat, usually grumble, and again go about our business; we do not, we Londoners, linger over dishes as the Parisian gentlemen, and even ladies, have been observed to do, as though there were no hereafter.

Hence it has become a point of honour with every adventurous visitor to Paris to bring back with him

tidings of the discovery of the best little restaurant in that city. It is equally a point of honour not to say where it is. For several years my breast was the safe depository of one of these gustatory secrets, and I should be guarding it still were it not for the circumstance that that intrepid deglutitionist, Lieutenant-Colonel Newnham-Davis, otherwise known, to readers of the pinker papers, as the 'Dwarf of Blood,' included it in a new edition of his European guide to gastronomes. After that the game was, of course, up, and I tell inquirers frankly that the name of my restaurant is Boilaive and the address 2, Rue Geoffrey Marie. But, so long as the indefatigable exploring Lieutenant-Colonel knew it not, I preserved its identity as a sacred trust. (A wonderful man, the Dwarf of Blood, with an alimentary memory which brings East and West into instant relationship. For once, as I was eating grilled ham with him at Rottingdean, he remarked that he had not thought that such perfection in that dish could be obtained anywhere but at Singapore. Whether that was professional bluff or a candid statement of opinion, it is equally superb. Every one present at once glowed—the guests, to be in the company of so erudite a gourmet; the host, to have set such a triumph on the table. Meanwhile I was speculating as to whether when next the epicure visited Singapore and ate ham, he would thrill them with Rottingdean.)

I do not say that in London we have not our discoveries too, but they are not so precious, and almost always they are of foreign extraction. The charm of the little Paris restaurants which we hunt so gaily is that they are French. Rarely are their English correlatives English, but either French or Italian. Rarely, also, is it safe to recommend them, because their period of excellence is so brief that by the time our friends get

there deterioration has set in, usually in the form of another proprietor; or the space is so restricted that our friends, by becoming patrons, exclude ourselves.

But, supposing I were to be so peculiar as to say that I knew of a little purely English eating-house in London with rather curious and attractive qualities. What then?

The attractions of Arne's (as I will call it) are not confined to the soundness and cheapness of its food. But sound it is, and so cheap that there is change from a shilling out of almost every dish. The sensible kinds of food, too—stews, hashes, mutton broths, haddocks (a speciality) with hot buttered toast, and little placards on the wall mentioning clarets to drink with them and ports to drink after them. But mere food can be found everywhere, although not of this modest excellence: Arne's I value chiefly for other merits, and I believe that first and foremost among those I should put its provinciality in the midst of sophisticated London—for Arne's is not of the City but the West End. And when I say West End I mean West End; and not, as the newspaper placards do, after a raid on a waiters' club, Soho or Percy Street. I mean the West End. Arne's, although firmly established in the more or less gilt-edged district, with a steady clientèle of Londoners, is yet of the provinces. It might have been transplanted by Aladdin from Birmingham, say. There is nothing essentially of London about it; unless, of course, by refusing to be modernized and preserving its ancient character, Arne offers the spectacle to-day of the London of the past—of a truer London than London has become. That would be delightful, if Arne's apparent provincialism were in reality London absolute! Perhaps it is. Perhaps Arne's incorruptible

old-fashionedness is only its fidelity to a London which most of us have permitted ourselves to forget.

Arne's still clings to high-backed pews and tables without cloths. Even its waiters, save one pliocene male relic, are nice girls, all of whom have in some miraculous way been there for ever: miraculous, because Arne's dates from many years ago, and the nice girls are still young. Another of Arne's welcome qualities is its brightness and warmth without either garishness or stuffiness. No money goes into decoration or trimmings. No plush here, I give you my word. All is simple, and the proprietor is simplest of all, for though he is, I always imagine, and indeed as, after all these years, unless he has sadly mismanaged his affairs, he must be, a man (as a hall porter recently described an hotel eccentric to me) 'with plenty of wealth' (abundant and mouth-watering phrase!), yet he is never seen out of his white apron. Garbed in this assurance of personal devotion to business, he walks up and down the room with the rather painful footsteps which seem to fall necessarily to the lot of those whose principal task it is to supply others with meals; or bends his height solicitously over customers; or, late in the evening, is to be seen at the far end, partaking of a meal himself, with a brown toy Pomeranian pressed adoringly at his side. Such is the friendly caterer whom for the moment I call Mr. Arne.

But he is by no means the only Arne in the place. Far, indeed, from it! Mrs. Arne is always there too —either in the little sentry-box by the door, where bills are paid and cigars acquired, or walking splendidly up and down the room gathering homage and distributing salutations with grave dignity. For Mrs. Arne is something of the grande dame: her gowns are sumptuous, and her coiffure, a work both of beauty and of

art, serves as a model, distantly enough imitated, to the whole staff. How many pretty daughters she has, I have never discovered, but there is always one to be seen somewhere in the room, either taking her mother's place in the sentry-box, on which occasions it has a cluster of admirers about it, or seated, again among admirers, at one of the tables. Very voluble are these fashionable young women; but with all their finery and friends they are in the picture, too, and no suggestion that the paternal apron strikes them as an anomaly is ever conveyed.

How many sons there are, again I cannot say, for I am purely spectator ab extrâ in this friendly spot; but that certain of the girl intimates of the daughters are future daughters-in-law of the house I have always been convinced. That there are three sons who have enlisted, I do happen to know, and a few evenings ago I chanced to be there when the youngest of these strolled in, and after loitering a little at the sentry-box and then at table after table, at each of which was some acquaintance, and at one another son, not in khaki, with a pretty fiancée, he gradually reached his mother and was at once forced into a seat while she foraged in the kitchen for some of his favourite viands. It was very pretty to see her eye continually wandering his way with pride in his height and strength, and I liked the determination with which she fetched the champagne bottle with the india-rubber cork in it from its position on the mantelpiece near the cold buffet and poured him out a glass. In what other eating-house in London would you see that?

S. MARK'S SQUARE[1]

S. MARK'S SQUARE, or the Piazza, is more than the centre of Venice: to a large extent it is Venice. Good Venetians when they die flit evermore among its arcades.

No other city has so representative a heart. On the four musical nights here—afternoons in the winter—the Piazza draws like a magnet. That every stranger is here, you may be sure, and most Venetian men. Some sit outside Florian's and the other cafés; others walk round and round the bandstand; others pause fascinated beside the musicians. And so it has been for centuries, and will be. New ideas and fashions come slowly into this city, where one does quite naturally what one's father and grandfather did; and a good instance of such contented conservatism is to be found in the music offered to these contented crowds, for they are still true to Verdi, Wagner, and Rossini, and with reluctance are experiments made among the newer men.

In the daytime the population of the Piazza is more foreign than Venetian. In fact the only Venetians to be seen are waiters, photographers, and guides, the knots of errand boys watching the artists, and, I might add, the pigeons. But at night Venice claims it, although the foreigner is there too. It is amusing to sit at a table on the outside edge of Florian's great quadrangle of chairs and watch the nationalities, the Venetians, the Germans, the Austrians, and the Anglo-Saxons, as they move steadily round and round. Venice is, of course, the paradise both of Germans and Austrians. Every day in the spring and summer one or two steamers

[1] From *A Wanderer in Venice.*

arrive from Trieste packed with Austrian tourists awfully arrayed. Some hundreds have to return to Trieste at 2 o'clock; other hundreds remain till night. The beautiful word Venezia, which we cheapen but not too cruelly to Venice and the French soften to Venise, is alas! to Teutonic tongues Venedig.

The Venetians reach the Square first, smart, knowing, confident, friendly, and cheerful; then the Germans and Austrians, very obviously trippers; and then, after their hotel dinners, at about quarter-past nine, the English: the women with low necks, the men in white shirts, talking a shade too loud, monarchs of all they survey. But the honeymooners are the best—the solicitous young bridegrooms from Surbiton and Chislehurst in their dinner-jackets and black ties; their slender brides, with pretty wraps on their heads, here probably for the last or the first time, and so determined to appear Continental and tolerant, bless their hearts! They walk round and round, or sit over their coffee, and would be so happy and unself-conscious and clinging were it not for the other English here.

The fine republicanism of Venice is nowhere so apparent as on band nights. Such aristocrats as the city holds (and judging from the condition of the palaces to-day there cannot be many now in residence) either look exactly like the middle classes or abstain from the Piazza. The prevailing type is the well-to-do citizen, very rarely with his women folk, who moves among street urchins at play; cigar-end hunters; soldiers watchful for officers to salute; officers sometimes returning and often ignoring salutes; groups of slim upright Venetian girls in the stately black shawls, moving, as they always do, like queens; little uniformed schoolboys in 'crocodiles'; a policeman or two; a party from the country; a workman with his

wife and babies (for though the Venetians adore babies they see no incongruity in keeping them up till ten o'clock); epauletted and cocked-hatted gendarmes; and at intervals, like ghosts, officials from the Arsenal, often alone, in their spotless white linen.

Every type of Venetian is seen in the Square, save one—the gondolier. Never have I seen a gondolier there, day or night: not because it is too grand for him, but it is off his beat. When he has done his work he prefers the wine-shops of his own sestiere. No thought of any want of welcome would deter him, for Venice is republic to the core. In fact one might go further and say that it is a city of the poor. Where the poor lived in the great days when the palaces were occupied by the rich, one cannot quite understand, since the palace is the staple building; but there is no doubt as to where they live now: they live everywhere. The number of palaces which are wholly occupied by one family must be infinitesimal; the rest are tenements, anything but model buildings, rookeries. Venice has no aristocratic quarter as other cities have. The poor establish themselves either in a palace or as near it as possible.

I have referred to the girls in their black shawls or scialli. They remain in the memory as one of Venice's most distinguished possessions. A young sinuous private gondolier in white linen with a coloured scarf, bending to the oar, and thrusting his boat forward with muscular strokes, is a delight to watch; but he is without mystery. These girls have grace and mystery too. They are so foreign, so slender and straight, so sad. Their faces are capable of animation, but their prevailing expression is melancholy. Why is this? Is it because they know how secondary a place woman holds in this city of well-nourished, self-satisfied men?

Is it that they know that a girl's life is so brief: one day as supple and active as they are now and the next a crone? For it is one of the tragedies that the Venetian atmosphere so rapidly ages women.

But in their prime the Venetian girls in the black shawls are distinguished indeed, and there was not a little sagacity in the remark to me by an observer who said that, were they wise, all women would adopt a uniform. One has often thought this, in London, when a nurse in blue or grey passes refreshingly along a pavement made bizarre by expensive and foolish fashions; one realizes it even more in Venice.

Most of these girls have dark or black hair. The famous red hair of Venetian women is rarely seen out of pictures.

Round and round goes the chattering contented crowd, while every table at each of the four cafés, Florian's and the Aurora, the Quadri and the Ortes Rosa, swells the noise. Now and then the music, or the ordinary murmur of the Square in the long intervals, is broken by the noisy rattle of a descending shop shutter, or the hour is struck by the Merceria clock's bronze giants; now and then a pigeon crosses the sky and shows luminous where the light strikes its breast; now and then a feather flutters from a window ledge, great bats flit up and down, and the mosquitoes shrill in one's ear. It is an entertainment never failing in interest to the observer, and not the least amusing question that one asks oneself is, Where does every one sleep?

I shall always remember one band night here, for it was then that I saw a girl and her father whose images will never leave me, I know not why. Every now and then, but seldom indeed, a strange face or form will thus suddenly photograph itself on the memory, when it is only with the utmost concentrated effort, or not at all, that we can call up mental pictures

of those near and dear to us. I know nothing of these two; I saw them only once again, and then in just the same fugitive way; but if an artist were now to show me a portrait of either, I could point out where his hand was at fault. The band was playing the usual music—*Il Trovatore* or *Aïda* or *Lohengrin*—and the crowd was circulating when an elderly man with a long-pointed grey beard and moustache and the peculiar cast of countenance belonging to them (Don Quixotic) walked past. He wore a straw hat slightly tilted and was smoking a cigar. His arm was passed through that of a tall slender girl of about his own height, and, say, twenty-five, in red. She was leaning towards him and he slightly inclined towards her. They walked faster than Venice, and talked animatedly in English as they passed me, and the world had no one in it but themselves; and so they disappeared, with long strides and a curious ease of combined movement almost like skilful partners in a dance. Two nights later I saw them again. This time she was in black, and again they sailed through the crowd, a little leaning towards each other, he again holding her arm, and again both discussing in English something with such interest that they were conscious of nothing around them. Sitting outside a café on the Piazza every evening for a month, one naturally sees many travellers come and go; but none other in that phantasmagoria left any mark on my mind. Why did these?

So much for S. Mark's Square by night. With thousands of persons, to think of S. Mark's Square by day is chiefly to think of pigeons. Many a visitor to Venice who cannot remember the details of a single painting there can show you a photograph of herself with pigeons on her shoulders and arms. Photographers and dealers in maize are here all day to effect these pretty conjunc-

tions; but the Kodak has seriously impaired their profits. The birds are smaller than our London monsters and not quite so brilliantly burnished. How many there are, I have no idea; but since they are sacred, their numbers must be ever increasing. Why they are sacred is something of a mystery. One story states that the great Enrico Dandolo had carrier-pigeons with him in the East which conveyed the grand tidings of victories to Venice; another says that the same heroic old man was put in possession of valuable strategic information by means of a carrier-pigeon, and on returning to Venice proclaimed it a bird to be reverenced. There was once a custom of loosing a number of pigeons among the crowd in the Piazza on Palm Sunday. The birds being weighted floundered downwards and were caught and killed for the pot; but such as escaped were held to have earned their liberty for ever.

At night no doubt the pigeons roost among S. Mark's statuary and on convenient ledges in the neighbourhood; by day, when not on the pavement of the Piazza, the bulk of the flock are dotted about among the reliefs of the Atrio, facing S. Mark's.

They have no timidity, but by a kind of honourable understanding they all affect to be startled by the bells at certain hours, and by the midday gun, and ascend in a grey cloud for a few seconds.

They are never so engaging as when flying double, bird and shadow, against the Campanile.

Their collective cooing fills the air and makes the Piazza's day music.

Venetians crossing the Piazza walk straight on, through the birds, like Moses crossing the Red Sea; the foreigners pick their way.

What with S. Mark's and the pigeons, the Campanile and coffee, few visitors have any time to inquire as to

the other buildings of the Piazza. Nor are they of much interest. Briefly they are the Old Procuratie, which forms the side on which the clock is, the Atrio, or Fabbrica Nuova, opposite S. Mark's, and the New Procuratie on the Campanile side. The Old Procuratie, whose main row of windows I once counted, making either a hundred or a hundred and one, is now offices and, above, residences. Here once abode the nine procurators of Venice, who, under the Doge, ruled the city.

The New Procuratie is now the Royal Palace, and you may see the royal lackeys conversing with the sentinels in the doorway by Florian's. It is the finer building: over the arches it has good sprawling Michael-Angelesque figures, noble lions' heads, and massive ornamentations.

I don't know for certain, but I should guess that the Royal Palace in Venice is the only abode of a European King that has shops underneath it. Wisely the sleeping apartments face the Grand Canal, with a garden intervening; were they on the Piazza side sleep would be very difficult. But all the great State rooms overlook the Piazza. The Palace is open on fixed days and shown by a demure flunkey in an English bowler hat, but it should be the last place to be visited by the sightseer. Its only real treasures—the Tintorettos illustrating the life of S. Mark—were not visible on the only occasion on which I ventured in.

Beneath these three buildings—the two Procuratie and the Fabbrica Nuova—runs an arcade where the Venetians congregate in wet weather and where the snares for tourists are chiefly laid by the dealers in jewellery, coral, statuary, lace, glass, and mosaic. But the Venetian shopkeepers are not clever: they have not the sense to leave the nibbler alone. One has not been looking in the window for more than two seconds before a silky-voiced youth appears at the door and

begins to recommend his wares and invite custom; and then of course one moves away in terror.

Here, too, under the arcade, are the headquarters of the cafés, which do most of their business on the pavement of the Square. Of these Florian's is the oldest and best. At certain hours, however, one must cross the Square to either the Ortes Rosa or Quadri, or be roasted. The original Florian was wise in his choice of site, for he has more shady hours than his rivals opposite. In an advertisement of the café in the musical programme it is stated that, 'the oldest and most aristocratic establishment of its kind in Venice, it can count among its clients, since 1720, Byron, Goethe, Rousseau, Canova, Dumas, and Moor,' meaning by Moor not Othello but Byron's friend and biographer, the Anacreon of Erin. How Florian's early patrons looked one can see in a brilliant little picture by Guardi in the National Gallery, No. 2099. The café boasts that its doors are never shut, day or night; and I have no doubt that this is true, but I have never tested it in the small hours.

Oddly enough there are no restaurants in the Piazza, but many about its borders on the north and west. The visitor to Venice, as a rule, eats in his hotel; and I think he is wise. But wishing to be in Venice rather more thoroughly than that, I once lived in rooms for a month and ate in all the restaurants in turn. Having had this experience, I expect to be believed when I say that the restaurants of Venice are not good. The food is monotonous, and the waiting, even at what is called the best, the Bauer-Grünwald, say, or the Pilsen, is leisurely. Add to this that the guests receive no welcome, partly because, all the places being understaffed, no one can be spared for that friendly office, and partly because politeness is not a Venetian foible. An im-

mense interval then elapses before the lista, or bill of fare, is brought, partly because there is no waiter disengaged and partly because there seems to be a law in Venetian restaurants that one menu shall suffice for eight tables.

Then comes the struggle—to find anything new either to eat or drink. The lista contains in print a large number of attractive things, but few are obtainable, for on an Italian menu print is nothing: it is only the written words that have any relevance. The print is in Italian and German, the reason being that Italians, Germans, and Austrians are the only people who resort to restaurants. The English and Americans eat in their hotels, en pension. (In Venice, I might say, all foreigners are addressed first in German, except by the little boys in the streets whose one desire on earth is to direct you to S. Marco and be paid for their trouble. They call you *m'soo*.) Once a meal is ordered it comes rapidly enough, but one has to be very hungry to enjoy it. For the most part Venetian food is Italian food: that is to say, almost wholly veal and paste; but in the matter of fish Venice has her specialities. There are, for example, those little toy octopuses which on my first visit, twenty-five years ago, used to be seen everywhere in baskets at corners, but now have disappeared from the streets. These are known as calamai or calamaretti, and if one has the courage to take the shuddering first step that counts they will be found to be very good. But they fail to look nice. Better still are scampi, a kind of small crawfish, rather like tenderer and sweeter langouste.

To the investigator I recommend the dish called variously frutta di mare and fritto misto, in which one has a fried jumble of the smaller sea creatures of the lagoon, to the scampi and calamaretti being added fresh sardines

(which the fishermen catch with the hand at low tide), shrimps, little soles, little red mullets, and a slice or two of big cuttle fish. A popular large fish is the bronzino, and great steaks of tunny are always in demand too. But considering Venice's peculiar position with regard to the sea and her boasted dominion over it, fish are very dear.

Even more striking is the dearness of fruit, but this, I take it, is due to the distance that it must come, either by rail or water. No restaurant that I discovered—as in the fair land of France and indeed elsewhere in Italy—places wine or grapes free on the table.

As I say, I tried all the Venetian houses, small and large—the Cappello Nero, the Bella Venezia, the Antico Panada, the Bauer-Grünwald, the Bonvecchiato, the Cavalletti, the Pilsen; and the only one I felt any desire to return to was the Pilsen, which is large and noisy and intensely Teutonic, but a shade more attentive than the others. The Bella Venezia is the best purely Venetian house.

I cannot remember the old Campanile with enough vividness to be sure, but my impression is that its brick was a mellower tint than that of the new: nearer the richness of S. Giorgio Maggiore's, across the water. Time may do as much for the new Campanile, but at present its colour is not very satisfactory except when the sun is setting. Indeed, so new is it that one cannot think of it as having any association whatever with S. Mark's. If it belongs to anything, it is to Venice as a whole, or possibly the Royal Palace. Yet one ought not to cavil, for it stands so bravely on the spot where its predecessor fell, and this is a very satisfactory proof that the Venetians, for all the decay of their lovely city and the disappearance of their marvellous power, are Venetians still.

The old Campanile, after giving various warnings, fell on July 14, 1902, at half-past nine in the morning. On the evening of the same day the Town Council met under the chairmanship of Count Grimani, the mayor, and without the least hesitation decided that a successor must be erected: in the fine words of the count: 'Dov' era, com' era' ('Where it was and as it was'). Sympathy and contributions poured in from the outside world to strengthen the hands of the Venetians, and on S. Mark's Day (April 25), 1903, the first stone was laid. On S. Mark's Day, 1912, the new campanile was declared complete in every part and blessed in the presence of representatives of all Italy, while 2479 pigeons, brought hither for the purpose, carried the tidings to every corner of the country.

The most remarkable circumstance about the fall of the Campanile is that no one was hurt. The Piazza and Piazzetta are by no means empty at half-past nine in the morning, yet these myriad tons of brick and stone sank bodily to the ground and not a human bruise resulted. Here its behaviour was better than that of the previous campanile of S. Giorgio Maggiore, which, when it fell in 1774, killed one monk and injured two others. Nor was S. Mark's harmed, although its sacristan confesses to have been dumb for three days from the shock. The golden angel from the top of the Campanile was found in front of the central door as though to protect the church. Sansovino's Loggetta, it is true, was crushed and buried beneath the débris, but human energy is indomitable, and the present state of that structure is a testimony to the skill and tenacity which still inhabit Venetian hands and breasts.

What I chiefly miss in the new Campanile is any aerial suggestion. It has actual solidity in every inch of it, apart from the fact that it also conveys the idea of

solidity, as any building must which has taken the place of one so misguided as to fall down. But its want of this intangible quality, together with its newness, have displaced it in my eyes as the king campanile of Venice. In my eyes the campanile of S. Giorgio Maggiore now reigns supreme, while I am very much attached also to those of the Frari and S. Francesco della Vigna. But let S. Mark's Campanile take heart: some day Anno Domini will claim these others too, and then the rivalry will pass. But as it is, morning, noon, and evening the warm red bricks and rich green copper top of S. Giorgio Maggiore's bell-tower draw the gaze first and hold it longest. It is the most beautiful campanile of all, and its inevitableness is such that, did we not know the truth, we should wonder if the six days of creation had not included an afternoon for the ordainment of such edifices.

It would need a Hans Andersen to describe the feelings of the other Venetian campaniles when S. Mark's tall column fell. S. Giorgio's I imagine instantly took command, but no doubt there were other claimants to the throne. I rather fancy that the Frari's had something to say, and S. Pietro in Castello's also, on account of his age and his early importance; but who could pay any serious attention to a tower so pathetically out of the perpendicular as he now is?

The new Campanile endeavours to reproduce the old faithfully, and it was found possible to utilize a little of the old material. The figures of Venice on the east wall above the belfry canopy and Justice on the west are the ancient ones pieced together and made whole; the lions on the north and south sides are new. The golden angel on the summit is the old one restored, with the novelty, to her, as to us, of being set on a pivot to act as a vane. I made this discovery for

myself, after being puzzled by what might have been fancied changes of posture from day to day, due to optical illusion. One of the shopkeepers on the Square, who has the Campanile before his eye continually, replied, however, when I asked him if the figure was fixed or movable, 'Fixed.' This double duty of the new campanile angel—to shine in golden glory over the city and also to tell the wind—must be a little mortifying to her celestial sister on the campanile of S. Giorgio, who is immovable. But no doubt she has philosophy enough to consider subjection to the caprices of the breeze a humiliation.

Another change for which one cannot be too grateful is the lift. For the modest price of a franc one can be whirled to the belfry in a few seconds at any time of the day and refresh one's eyes with the city and the lagoon, the Tyrolese Alps, and the Euganean hills. Of old one ascended painfully; but never again. Before the fall there were five bells, of which only the greatest escaped injury. The other four were taken to a foundry set up on the island of Sant' Elena and there fused and recast at the personal cost of His Holiness the late Pope, who was Patriarch of Venice. I advise no one to remain in the belfry when the five are at work. They begin slowly and with some method; they proceed to a deafening cacophony, tolerable only when one is far distant.

There are certain surprises in the view from the Campanile. One is that none of the water of the city is visible—not a gleam—except a few yards of the Grand Canal and a stretch of the Canale della Giudecca; the houses are too high for any of the by-ways to be seen. Another revelation is that the floor pattern of the Piazza has no relation to its sides. The roofs of Venice we observe to be neither red nor brown, but something

between the two. Looking first to the north, over the three flagstaffs and the pigeon feeders and the Merceria clock, we see away across the lagoon the huge sheds of the dirigibles and (to the left) the long railway causeway joining Venice to the mainland as by a thread. Immediately below us in the north-east are the domes of S. Mark's, surmounted by the graceful golden balls on their branches, springing from the leaden roof, and farther off are the rising bulk of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, with its derivative dome and golden balls, the leaning tower of S. Maria del Pianto, and beyond this the cemetery and Murano. Beneath us on the east side is the Ducal Palace, and we look right into the court-yard and on to the prison roof. Farther away are the green trees of the Giardini Pubblici, the leaning tower of S. Pietro di Castello, and S. Nicholas of the Lido. In the south-east are the Lido's various hotels and the islands of S. Lazzaro (with the campanile) and S. Servolo. In the south is the Grand Canal with a Guardi pattern of gondolas upon it, criss-crossing like flies; then S. Giorgio's lovely island and the Giudecca, and beyond these various islands of the lagoon: La Grazia, S. Clemente, and, in the far distance, Malamocco. In the south-west the Custom House pushes its nose into the water, with the vast white mountain of the Salute behind it. In the west is the Piazza, immediately below, with its myriad tables and chairs; then the backs of the S. Moïse statues; and farther away the Frari and its campanile, the huge telegraph-wire carriers of the harbour; across the water Fusina, and beyond in the far distance the jagged Euganeans.

At sunset the landscape is sharpened and brought nearer. The deep blue of the real sea, beyond the lagoon, grows deeper; the great fields of mud (if it is low tide) gleam and glisten. And so it will ever be.

THE WAY WITH A LORD[1]

WHEN the time comes to pass under review one's roll of fortuitous acquaintances, many of us whose habit it is to loaf in the Charing Cross Road (best of throughfares since Holywell Street was tumbled down by an immoral County Council) will find that the most amusing company has been fished from fourpenny boxes and dusty shelves. In this way a few months ago I have met many odd fellows, and in this way last week I met Henry Melton, who of all of us knew the right way of a man with a lord, and lords were never so under the microscope as they have lately been.

Melton, who was hatter to the late King when Prince of Wales, published in the eighteen-sixties a book which he entitled *Hints on Hats*, although its true value (which so often is not where the author deems it) is its hints on Melton. The hat part is nothing: you may get it in any encyclopædia; but Mr. Melton in relation to his patrons is everything.

Mr. Melton senior had £100,000, and the son was educated to inherit it. But 'a reverse in the will of Dame Fortune' (that fickle jade, as he finely calls her), made it necessary to enter business.

'About this time (he writes) the successful career of the famous Mr. Moore, the hatter, attracted my attention. The fashionable position of his son, his four-in-hand, his general reception into good society, his reputation as a patron of art and *belles lettres*, pointed to well-earned wealth in trade as something worthy a young gentleman's ambition; so I made up my mind to be a Hatter, and set forth, with the earnest enthusiasm of

[1] From *Loiterer's Harvest.*

youth, on a career which I expected would lead certainly to wealth and fame.'

That was, I gather, in the thirties; and with not a little sagacity for one who had spent so much time in expecting to be well off, the young man selected the Last of the Dandies, Count D'Orsay—then still cutting a figure at Gore House and in the Row—as his first client.

'With the dash of youth I at once threw my bread upon the water, and wrote to the Count in as delicate a manner as I well could, stating my ambition as desirous of making even my calling associated with art and taste. By return of post I received a courteously worded request to wait upon the Count at Kensington Gore. Here I was received in the true style in which an exquisite might be expected to welcome an aspirant to taste. I stood before him, in my own opinion, the Benvenuto Cellini of hats before a Pope—honoured in the greatness of my patron, but still, in my own conceit, a master of my art. I soon had reason for some diffidence as to my own merits, even in my own business, and speedily recognized the master mind of elegance and fashion.

'The Count, upon receiving me, evidently felt resolved to test the aspiring youth who had addressed him. He quickly requested me to point out, what, according to my views, should constitute the essential merits of a hat.

'On a table in the Count's dressing-room I observed some fourteen hats lying all ready for wear. The Count seemed rather pleased with my zeal; and this kind reception, as well as his refined and elegant manner, encouraged me in the discussion which ensued upon the subject of hats, and ended in our mutually agreeing that the *desiderata* in regard to a hat consisted in its being light, although of a substance sufficient to retain its shape (a requisite in which all foreign-made hats were

at that time, and are even now, deficient) ; that it should be waterproof ; that it should be so made as to ensure comfort ; that the shaping and blocking and trimming were merely matters of taste and fashion of the period, but that the style of the hat should, nevertheless, be carefully studied, as much as possible, to make the wearer look like a gentleman.

'My replies generally seemed to satisfy the Count, who, in conclusion, said, smiling, "You have evidently made a study of your business. But you have forgotten," he added, "that a hat should be in proportion to the height of the wearer."

'I ventured to observe that I could not regard additional height as an improvement.

'"Quite the contrary," he observed. "It would render monstrous what was before distinguished. But a tall man, nevertheless, ought not to wear a low-crowned hat. It is an incongruity, and renders him conspicuous, and that, as I take it, is to be avoided. Again, a short man in a high hat is out of proportion ; it dwarfs him, as long hair does a lady who is *petite*."

'Upon this I ventured the remark that in such cases exactly it was that the eye of the hatter was required, for the wearer of a hat was not always the best judge of the style that best suited him.

'"Some men make their own styles, Mr. Melton," was the Count's reply, with a gentle smile. . . .

'My interview with this great leader of fashion ended in my receiving orders that resulted in a brilliant success. No part of the Count's personal attraction was more studied by him than his hat, nor was it the less noticed and admired by the public. His taste was marvellous, and his quickness of eye in costume beyond all that can be imagined, save by a beau of the Brummell school.

'As an illustration of the fact, his hats varied in dimensions to suit his coats. For his lighter, cut-off riding-coat he wore his hat smaller in all dimensions than for the thicker overcoats, especially that magnificent sealskin coat first introduced by him, and which now is somewhat general—indeed, has been imitated even by the ladies in their piquant winter jackets.

'Need I say that the consummate acuteness of this idea of a distinct hat for a particular coat left a deep and lasting impression of its importance on myself? Indeed, the mere enunciation of it made the fact self-evident, that a hat should most assuredly suit the width of shoulders or figure as much as the face.'

It is hard to have to omit Mr. Melton's remarks on other of his patrons—the Prince of Wales, of whose tall hat a picture is given, 'since many of the readers of this brochure may be resident in the country, in foreign climes, or remote colonies, and may not know the style' of it; the Prince Consort, who was 'a great advocate for ventilation' and wore a modified 'Anglesea'; the Earl of Harrington, whose test of a hat was to stand on it; and even Sir Edwin Landseer, who sent to Mr. Melton for a hat of the Prince Consort's to insert in a picture, and was then so lost to decency as to place it in such a position that the maker's name was not disclosed.

I have no room for the expansion of these passages; for it is the spectacle of Mr. Melton as the plain man in relation to a nobleman that is the interesting thing; and to that we now come. The narrative, again, is Mr. Melton's. Nobody else could have written it.

'Some time since I received a telegraphic message from the Earl of Stamford and Warrington to wait upon his lordship, who was then at Bradgate, his family seat

in Leicestershire ; and with all speed, following in good order the magnetic compliment of his lordship's request, I arrived at the nearest station to Bradgate. Being strange to the locality, my mind was busily occupied in deliberating as to which hotel I should put up at, and casting my eye along the platform to catch a porter whose countenance would impress me favourably with the desired recommendation, my eye fell upon one of his lordship's six-feet footmen, who, addressing me with marked respect, said he was there to receive me. I thanked him, and asked about the hotel, when he said, "I have been sent with a conveyance to take you to the house."

'At the house I arrived, duly welcomed by the butler, who paid me every polite attention. Orders were given to show me to my bedroom, where having indulged in a brush and my tortoiseshell, I returned to the reception-room, and to a glorious supper of the good things of Bradgate House, to which I did ample justice.

'On retiring to my bedroom a cheerful fire welcomed me with that spirting of the fiery embers which gives such a joyous charm to the log. My room, I need hardly say, was elegantly appointed, and afforded me a princely repose. On rising the next morning I was strongly impressed with the view from my bedroom window, situated in the happiest position for a fine bit of park scenery. The day was Sunday, and hearing that service would be performed in the house, I sent a message to the Earl to know if I might be permitted to attend. The request was answered in the true spirit of amiable condescension for which the Earl is so justly famed, and in company with the household, of between thirty and forty domestics, I wended my way into the fine room in which the service was performed, and there a seat was most graciously placed for me between

the household and the noble Earl and his beautiful Countess. I heard the service excellently read by the Rev. Mr. Paine, the Earl's private chaplain, who concluded it with a very admirable sermon. A scene of this character could not fail to be devoutly impressive to one, like myself, fresh from the crowded and miscellaneous worship of a metropolitan church assemblage. Nor was the effect lessened by my walk (after a capital luncheon) through the beautiful scenery of Bradgate Park, fraught as it is with reminiscences of the ancient family of the Ferrers of Groby, and doubly famous as the estate for whose restoration Elizabeth Woodville knelt as a widow at the 'Queen's Oak' to Edward IV. after the battle of Taunton, and conquered her conqueror so far as to become his queen in the year ensuing. Here, too, lived Lord Admiral Seymour, who walked in this park with his wife Catherine, the fortunate dowager-queen of the wife-killing Henry VIII. And here, with Lord Dorset, her father, were passed the few happy days of the Lady Jane Grey.

'My walk at an end, I retired to a dinner worthy of the Lord of Enville, and this disposed of, in the quiet coolness of the evening, I strolled over, on the gentle invitation of an accompanying cigar, to a remote and romantic part of the park, called "Anstey." Here I looked in upon Reeves, one of the principal superintendents of his lordship's preserves. I was much charmed with the interesting associations of the cottage, and more than pleased with its inmates, who consisted of an excellent mother, with a family of well-behaved, nice children; while Reeves himself displayed an amount of intelligence and education, as well as information, which gratified me vastly. He was well up in the subjects of the day, and speaking sympathizingly of the demise of the Prince Consort, touched me so keenly as

to prompt me on my return to town to send him a book which no man should neglect to read, *The Speeches and Addresses of the late Prince Consort*; a work, indeed, which I have, with much pleasure to my own feelings, presented to several of my friends. . . .

'Another agreeable night took me on to Monday, when his lordship briefly gave me one of his usual liberal orders.'

That is the way to treat a lord. Mr. Melton knew it exactly. Sad to think that the creation of a great number of peers would impair this admirable attitude of homage. But I fear that it would. Not even Mr. Melton, with all his stores of reverence and his instant appreciations, could be quite master of himself if the nobleman who invited him to the country—to receive briefly however liberal an order—had been converted but yesterday from material which he had known in the rough.

IN THE BRAVE THREEPENNY DAYS

ONCE upon a time the leading English newspaper, which is now a penny, was threepence. That such a rate for a morning journal was possible seems an incredible thing, and thinking upon it I have been remembering with much relief a curious character who haunted the British Museum Reading Room a quarter of a century ago. He cannot be there still, for he was elderly then: a military-looking man with a very upright, almost corseted, form, a reddish face and a gingery moustache that in its prime might have graced a major. His eye, however, was not martial, but blue and mild, watery and wandering, its quest being, I fancy, a convivial acquaint-

ance with enough money and generosity for two instalments of refreshment. His hair, which was scanty, was carefully brushed and parted at the back even to his collar, and upon it was perched at a slight angle a tall hat ironed beyond endurance. His erect body was encased in a tightly buttoned frock-coat so shiny that it glistened, and as for his boots, no really soft-hearted observer could bear to look twice at them, so inadequate were they to our city of rain.

Such was this jaunty threadbare scholar; but what was his special branch of learning I never discovered, nor did he make the discovery easy, for, though he had a desk, it seldom had books upon it, and he was rarely there: drifting instead about the vast room, exchanging a few words with this or that crony and too often leaving it with them on brief expeditions across the road. He may merely have been a sermon-copyist, busy only towards Sunday. He may have been a loafer pure and simple. I cannot say; but he was a landmark of the place, idiosyncratic enough to be stamped indelibly on at any rate one retina.

One other touch is needed to complete his appearance. He always wore gloves, which my memory inclines me to believe had once been pale yellow, and he was always accompanied by a copy of *The Times*. This, however, he did not carry in his hand, but he tucked it between the first and second buttons of his frock-coat, so folded that the title was visible, thus guaranteeing to the world that he was one who went to the fountain-head for his politics and foreign information. By this sign-mark, in spite of the wear and tear which were only too visible in his clothes, he became a man apart, for few regular readers among us could afford such an organ, even if we were attracted by anything so august and severe. But naturally we all thought the more of him for his

journal. The suggestion of poverty became merely eccentricity.

And then one day, standing by him closely, I made the humiliating discovery—as humiliating to me as to him—that the date of the protruding copy of *The Times* was a year or so past, and, looking more narrowly at the paper itself, I realized that it had been folded thus for months and months and months. . . .

Innocent deception! I wish I had never detected it, and I am glad to think that the gallant old gentleman never knew that it was pierced. But how comforting it is to know that he was well in his grave before the great revolution set in, to reduce his proof of gentility to a penny, and, thus reducing it, to render it invalid evermore!

THE ELECTION[1]

RUDD and his father had maintained easy relations, without idolizing on the boy's part or any rapture of affection on the man's. Rudd took it for granted that his father was above criticism. He had never set him either on a pinnacle or beneath the microscope; he was his father, the head of the house, the dictator, the payer of rent, the provider of insufficient pocket-money.

When other boys framed indictments of their governors (as some boys will) Rudd listened with surprise and turned away in distaste. But equally when other boys bragged about their governors (also occasionally a boyish habit)—their position, power, prowess or generosity—Rudd took little interest. He had no particular fault to find with Mr. Sergison and no particular praise for him.

[1] From *Landmarks*.

Just as abuse of one's pater offended him, so did exaltation of one's pater seem a bit of a howler.

Rudd had never asked himself how much affection he felt for his father. His mother he could love achingly: after hurting or disappointing her by some thoughtlessness or misdemeanour, he had sobbed and suffered secretly for hours, and again, retrospectively, on returning to school. But his feelings for his father he took for granted. He was filial.

When Mr. Sergison had complained of the toughness of the beef (as he often did, having an incurable aversion from the dentist), and had even left the dinner-table as a protest, Rudd had merely assumed that that was as it should be; that it was all in the paternal part. Fathers have the right to kick up a row. It is possibly even their duty to lose their tempers: just as it is the duty of mothers to keep theirs and smilingly accept a responsibility which belonged, as a stricter logician than Mr. Sergison would think, to the ox, the butcher, the cook, or to God. That was Rudd's inarticulate view of the matter.

And, as a matter of fact, there was not much trouble in the Sergison household. Things went fairly smoothly: Mr. Sergison was never contradicted except by a visitor or guest, and gradually the visitors and guests who came to the house had been subjected to so thorough a process of selection (as in so many other houses) that the contradictors had all been weeded out and Sir Oracle barked without demur. By carefully choosing one's company one can easily be the best man in it; and this Mr. Sergison subconsciously knew. His wife's brothers, Rudd's uncles, were the only real danger; but they came seldom, and chiefly when they heard from their sister that her husband was away.

Not that Mr. Sergison was much of a bully or a dog-

matist. But he liked his own way, and having made his fortune unaided, and retired, he thought he had earned the right to get it. Mrs. Sergison and Rudd tacitly agreed.

Mr. Sergison was a short, florid, well-dressed man with a fierce moustache. He talked well and laughed loudly. He was heartiest when people were leaving.

The most surprising thing about him was that he was a Liberal. Asked to what party he belonged, nineteen out of every twenty strangers, looking at him, would have said Tory. But he was a very keen Liberal indeed. Not that his politics were ever statesmanship; he was not constructive, and if it had not been for the *Daily News*' leading articles he would often have had little enough to say. His politics, in short, were at bottom not politics at all, but partisanship, prejudice. A devout and incorrigibly loyal hero-worshipper, he had come early under the spell of a great Liberal and had never wavered.

Mr. Sergison got up late, read the papers very thoroughly, purring over the *Daily News* and snarling over the *Times*; spent much time actively in the garden, from which he extracted periodical attacks of lumbago; visited his club after lunch; returned for tea and such letter-writing as he did; and read books of travel at night after dinner. He interested himself in local affairs to some extent, and was on various committees. Now and then he took the chair at a meeting, being quite a fair speaker; now and then he entertained a Liberal orator; now and then he and Mrs. Sergison dined out or gave a modest dinner-party.

With Rudd Mr. Sergison was patronizing and bland, with a tincture of irony. Rudd did not irritate him, as some boys do their fathers; and his manner did not offend Rudd, who expected nothing else. As I say, their relations were easy, but neither made any effort to cultivate

the other. Mr. Sergison had never really wanted the thrill of paternity, nor had he experienced it. Rudd shared none of his father's tastes, while gardening, in particular, he detested.

Having selected a school for Rudd, travelled with him to it on his first term, and handed him half-a-crown, Mr. Sergison considered that he might honestly take several years off duty as an active parent. The rest was between the schoolmaster and Mrs. Sergison.

It was towards the middle of the term when a letter from Mrs. Sergison to Rudd contained terrific news: 'I am rather sorry to have to tell you,' she wrote, 'that father has been persuaded to stand for Parliament at the by-election following on the death of Mr. Rushton. He is, of course, highly excited about it,' she went on, 'and I see very little of him just now. I wish he had not consented, for if he gets in he will find the work of Parliament very vexatious and wearing, while if he is defeated he will be embittered, I fear, and will regret the expense.'

Rudd promptly replied to the great news.

'DEAR FATHER,—I am very glad you are going into Parliament. Please let me come home for the election. I should fearfully like to see one, and I might be able to help. Pascoe, one of the boys here whose father is member for Tryfleet, says that he was out all day in a carriage bringing voters to the poll. He says he would come and help us, if you liked, although his father is a Conservative. He says he has no bitter feelings that would prevent his experience being at your disposal. Anyway I hope you will let me come home for a day or two. Please arrange it with Mr. Stokes.—Your loving son, R. S.'

Rudd's chances of getting his way were seriously jeopardized by the addition of the letters M.P. to his

father's name on the address, but he succeeded, although no invitation to the energetic and magnanimous Pascoe was included.

Mr. Stokes called him to his room and said that in response to Mr. Sergison's desire he might go home for two nights. 'I could wish,' he added, 'that your father's politics were of another colour, but since it is of importance that men of weight and high motives should from time to time leaven the Liberal ranks, you can give him my cordial wishes for his success.'

Pascoe accompanied Rudd to the station and gave him some last words of counsel. 'Don't forget,' he said, 'that your governor must kiss some babies, like the man in *Pickwick*, you know. Mine kissed lots. And if he doesn't kiss them he must say he never saw a kid half so fine in all his puff. He must shake hands, too, with every one. Just bowing is no good at all. It 's a great pity I 'm not going to be there, I could put him up to such lots of things.'

Rudd's cab had not proceeded twenty yards into Caston before a poster came in sight with 'VOTE FOR SERGISON' on it in huge letters. It was Rudd's first experience of publicity, and it gave him an odd chilly feeling. This Sergison, whose claims to be supported had to be blazoned forth on vulgar hoardings among music-hall and theatre advertisements and pictures, was his father! Something sacred in his home life detached itself and fell away.

And then came a ruder shock, for on the next poster was Mr. Sergison's portrait, as though he was a conjurer (no such luck!) or pianist. It was larger than life and much coarser, and underneath it were the words, 'VOTE FOR SERGISON, THE MAN FOR CASTON.'

How could he allow it? Rudd wondered what his mother thought of it?

'What are Mr. Sergison's chances?' he asked the cabman.

'Not very good,' he said; 'he's the wrong colour, I'm thinking. They're getting to be a very Tory lot here.'

'But the last member was Liberal, wasn't he?' Rudd asked.

'Yes, he was,' said the driver; 'but he was very popular, you know, and he had done so much for the place. Things have changed, too, since he got in last.'

It was the day preceding the poll, and each candidate was to have a final meeting that night. Meanwhile they were making last desperate efforts to influence voters; answering questions everywhere; paying hurried calls at the various committee rooms; while each was bent upon one final attack on the employees at the great factory on the edge of the town, who were numerous enough to settle the result if they could be won over.

Suddenly and with a kind of shock Rudd caught a glimpse of his father in the street, and was astonished to see into what a perfect candidate his tailor had transformed him. Resplendent in frock-coat, white waistcoat, white spats and tall hat, he was talking with a radiating amiability, infrequent at home, to a dirty navvy. The suggestion of deference in his father's attitude stuck in Rudd's memory for years after.

The house was in a muddle, the effect of excitement and guests, and Rudd found his mother nervous and restless. Gentlemen from London were staying there for the night's meeting, among them a real lord. That is to say, a real lord by title, but in reality a younger son, a House of Commons lord; real enough, however, to upset an ordinary Englishman's castle, as it is the nobility's privilege to do. In order that the lord might have a dressing-room, Rudd must sleep on a sofa in the drawing-

room: an unnecessary precaution, as it happened, for the lord was a casual fellow, who didn't even go to the bathroom, and the condition of his hair-brushes was the talk of the kitchen for months after.

Mrs. Sergison looked tired and unhappy, but Rudd's presence cheered her.

'Will he get in?' Rudd asked.

'I don't think so,' she said. 'I 'm afraid he hasn't done enough for the town, and the tide 's against the Liberals just now, I am told. For myself, I hope he won't, for it will mean moving to London and every kind of upset, and I am certain that he will soon hate it, even if it doesn't make him ill. He 's too impatient for the House of Commons.'

Dinner was to be at half-past six sharp, on account of the great meeting, and Rudd, for the first time in his life, saw a row of champagne bottles in his father's house. Not that Mr. Sergison was a teetotaller; but hitherto sherry, claret and port had represented the utmost he had attempted for state occasions, and claret alone for ordinary domestic conviviality. It seemed, Mrs. Sergison explained to Rudd, that legislators expect champagne.

'May I open one now?' he asked, with his eyes big as they rested on the golden-wired corks; but it was generally agreed that to open champagne some hours before it was needed might be a mistake. The cook was certain of it; the others thought it probable.

After lunch with his mother, Rudd hurried to the town to see the fun. He found the familiar streets wearing a totally new air. Placards were everywhere, stationary and being carried by sandwich-men: each candidate's defeating the other's, for no one soul would vote for both. To have the family name so exploited seemed a kind of indecency to the boy.

Every now and then a shop had been turned into a committee room; and important men in ancient tall hats fussed in the doorways; carriages dashed up, from which other important men in ancient tall hats sprang; small idle crowds watched.

While Rudd stood in one of these inquisitive knots, a little band of important men hurried up, satellizing about a quiet, gentle-looking but distinguished man in a comfortable tweed suit, who smoked a long cigar. It was his father's rival, Brayshaw, the enemy of the house; yet strangely Rudd felt an admiration for him. He couldn't help it. There was no disloyalty in the feeling: simply this was the kind of swell that always took his fancy, the kind of swell that he himself would like to be if ever he could be a swell at all.

Without being rude or superior, Mr. Brayshaw obviously found the homage of the important men distasteful; but he had realized the necessity of going through with it, and was behaving as well as he could. He disappeared with his dependants into his committee rooms, principally to refill two large cigar-cases, and Rudd moved on, with the memory of the curve of his father's back as he addressed the navvy too clear in his mind. Should the struggle for inclusion among the law-makers of England necessitate that?

Various people recognized him, and all asked him if he had a holiday to see his father get in. All his short life he had noticed the tendency of grown-up persons to say the same thing, but never more than this afternoon.

The dinner that evening was a kind of nightmare. In addition to Lord William Ruse, there were Sir Victor Uglow and Mr. Loney Imms, the famous Q.C., M.P. Mrs. Sergison was the only lady, and no one paid her any but the most perfunctory attention. As for Rudd,

he was ignored completely. Mr. Sergison was very jumpy and ate almost nothing; the others ate heartily and drank accordingly. They were old stagers. This, Mr. Sergison's first election, was merely a detail in their routine, for they were all high on the Whip's list of provincial exhorters. By-election after by-election found them busily haranguing.

Their talk this evening was wholly on electioneering and wire-pulling, until they reached the respective merits and prices of wines. Mr. Loney Imms was the principal talker, wagging his finger as he spoke for greater emphasis. He seemed to think the others were the jury, and now and then he fixed Rudd's eye, which could not help looking at him, as though he was the foreman. But he said nothing to Rudd personally. The only one who spoke to him was Sir Victor Uglow, who asked if Rugby was played at his school, and on hearing that it was not, lost all interest in him and it.

Rudd was to have a seat on the platform with his mother and other influential supporters of the Liberal cause in the town and neighbourhood; but when Mrs. Sergison begged to be excused, on account of a headache, he said that he should sit in the body of the hall, wherever he could: he had not enough courage for the platform, alone.

Mr. Sergison was far too much occupied with forethoughts of his speech to raise any objections, and Rudd was, therefore, allowed to go off first in order to get to the meeting early.

There is something about an election, even to a boy ignorant of everything that elections mean, that is both exciting and moving. The air is charged with electricity, of which even the non-political are conductors. As from his seat among the crowd Rudd surveyed the

meeting his heart beat hardly less furiously than if his father had not been the central figure.

At first the company sang party songs, at intervals an important man calling for cheers for this honoured name and hisses or groans for that execrated one, all of which seemed curiously crude to Rudd, who had thought of schoolboys as the only practitioners of such rites, and had never greatly admired them for it. But when the concourse on the platform at last fluttered and rose to its feet, and the band began to play 'See the conquering hero comes,' and from the advancing knot of black coats and white shirts the form and features of his father emerged, Rudd's face burned, and when a woman next him stood up and waved her handkerchief he longed to disappear into the ground. It seemed wrong for a member of the family to be present and witness the Sergison triumph and hear that ghastly tune.

Every one about him, he felt, must know that he was the hero's son. As a matter of fact none did; but how many years some of us have to spend in this world before we realize that we are not the centre of observation!

Mr. Sergison, though nervous, was neither flushed nor confused. Rudd, for the first time in his life, and without putting the thought into words, thought him pathetic.

Then the noise died down, the people resumed their seats, and the meeting began.

The chairman first read a telegram from the Prime Minister wishing Rudd's father every success in his battle for the right; he then read a telegram from another Minister imploring the electors of Caston to return Mr. Sergison and thus once again prove their loyalty to the highest principles of public life and the

great Liberal faith ; and next a number of expressions of regret at unavoidable absence were made public.

The chairman then passed on to utter what he promised would be only three or four sentences—(No, no) —in praise of their candidate. (Applause.) Mr. Sergison was, he said, a respected resident of their great town, eager for its welfare. (Cheers.) An ideal man to represent them, for, having retired from business, with all its worries and exactions, he was prepared to devote his whole time to the nation. (Cheers.) Of course it was late in the day to *introduce* Mr. Sergison to them. (Laughter.) They all knew him well—(cheers) —but this was his own first appearance as a chairman during the election, and he could not deny himself the pleasure—(applause)—of expressing his personal high esteem of their candidate. (Renewed applause.)

That evening, he would add, they were peculiarly fortunate, for not only was Mr. Sergison among them —(applause)—but on the platform beside him were three such doughty warriors in the cause of Liberalism —(loud cheers)—such tried and trusted comrades in their ranks—(cheers)—always in the very forefront of the fighting line—(renewed cheers)—as Lord William Ruse, M.P.—(cheers)—Sir Victor Uglow, M.P.—(cheers) —and Mr. Loney Imms, Q.C., M.P. (Cheers.)

He did not know what type of tub-thumper was regaling the rival meeting that evening with rancid eloquence—(laughter)—and specious promises—(renewed laughter)—but he would venture to wager—(applause) —that they had nothing there comparable with the rhetorical and intellectual treat in store for this audience. (Cheers.) He would now make way for Mr. Sergison. (Loud cheers.)

Rudd had been uncomfortable enough during the foregoing remarks, but when, as Mr. Sergison prepared

to rise, amid great enthusiasm, a big man in the gallery started singing 'For he 's a jolly good fellow,' which the audience gradually took up, Rudd, his cheeks flaming more violently than before, realized that he could stand it no longer.

Nothing—the conviction had been growing within him—could make him listen to his father's speech. He had long been meditating flight, but this final outburst settled it. It was a public-house song. It had no bearing on politics or law-making. It meant smacking people on the back and having a drink. It was going to ruin everything for a man who was in earnest and had been reading Hansard for a month.

By dint of struggling and squeezing, Rudd got out just before his father uttered his opening words.

In the street he breathed again. He looked at his watch—it was only twenty past eight. Should he go home and comfort his mother? Yes; but first (brilliant inspiration) he would look in at the enemy's meeting, and see what that was like. He would like also another glimpse of that fascinating candidate. How would he be dressed to-night? How would he contrast with—— But no, that was not the way to think. 'Poor father!' he murmured, yet why he chose the adjective he could not have explained.

The hall was packed, and the chairman was speaking. Rudd found a loophole between two short men's heads through which he could peer, and he picked out Mr. Brayshaw, who, unlike Mr. Sergison, was not in stiff evening dress, but wore a dinner jacket and soft shirt. He looked quite at his ease and again was disguising the contempt which his too unctuous supporters provoked.

'What I say is this,' the chairman was saying. He was a powerful-voiced horse-dealer in the town, possessed of great political influence among the poor.

'What I say is this, that we are lucky in our candidate. (Cheers.) Our candidate is a gentleman. He may not live among us, but he has chosen us not only for his friends—(loud applause)—but, as I firmly hope and believe, for his constituents—(terrific applause)—and I for one appreciate the honour to the full.' (Cheers.)

Rudd noticed how much more general was the excitement in this meeting.

'Politics aside,' the chairman continued, referring to a paper, 'for on them we are agreed—(cheers)—let us see what the Liberal candidate—(groans)—I say, let us see what the Liberal candidate—(more groans)—has done for the town in which he lives.'

Rudd's heart sank. What was coming next? he apprehensively wondered, and wished he had gone straight home. But he must hear it out.

'I have here a list of the contributors to various local charities and improvements,' said the chairman. 'I will begin with the report of the new recreation ground. I turn to the list of subscribers, and what do I find under the letter S? I find "Thomas Sergison, Esq., one guinea." One guinea, gentlemen! (Scornful laughter.) Twenty-one paltry shillings in order to help his poorer fellow-inhabitants to a game in the open air once a week!'

Rudd was horrified. If he had blushed in the other meeting, it was from an attack of delicacy probably quite false and to be resisted. But here his blood boiled at an outrage. This was low. Mr. Brayshaw ought not to allow it. Money had nothing to do with legislation. He began to back out.

'I turn next,' the speaker relentlessly continued, 'to the accounts of the Cottage Hospital, and what do I find? "Thomas Sergison, Esq., one guinea." And this is the gentleman to whom we are asked to entrust our interests in Parliament, this grudging subscriber to

the well-being of his town! No, gentlemen, what I say is we want no curmudgeon to represent us.' (Loud applause.)

Above the turmoil a voice in the body of the hall was heard.

'He gave another ten pounds a little while ago,' it shouted.

Every head turned in that direction, and Rudd felt a thrill of pride in the courage of this supporter of his family honour.

But the chairman quickly extinguished it. 'How long ago?' he asked.

'On the 13th,' said the man, consulting a paper.

'Yes,' said the chairman with a sneer, 'and it was on the 12th that Mr. Sergison accepted the invitation of his party to stand for Caston! We know what that ten pounds was for. It wasn't for the Cottage Hospital! (Loud cheers.) It was for the seat!' (Great excitement.)

Sicker at heart than before, Rudd, praying not to be recognized, continued to squeeze his way out, but it was very difficult, as he met other people pressing in.

'Jear that?' one man said to another. 'That 's the way. He 's giving Sergison beans.'

'I didn't know he was so mean,' said another, 'but I did know he was a windbag. And look at the way they heckled him last night. He hadn't an answer.'

'Please let me pass,' Rudd said desperately.

But before he could get through into the sweet night air he had to hear further and even more damaging criticisms.

His father had never been a demi-god; but this was awful. Was it true? Anyway, ought such things to be said of one's father? Was it not a defect in a father to be so vulnerable to such common people? Could anything

like that be said of Mr. Brayshaw? But was Mr. Sergison so mean? Now Rudd came to think of it, lots of boys returned to school with a quid and he never had had more than half-a-crown.

Rudd reached home in a state of misery. His mother had gone to bed and he went to sit with her.

'Why didn't you stay?' she asked.

'I didn't like it,' he said.

'Politics are very horrid,' she replied with a sigh.

They held each other's hands in the firelight for a long while in silence.

'Why are you so unhappy?' Mrs. Sergison at last inquired.

Bit by bit Rudd told her.

'Is it true?' he managed at last to ask, thus voicing the question which she knew was in his depths.

'Politics always lead to low personalities,' she said.

'But that ten pounds,' Rudd asked, 'wouldn't he have given it if he hadn't thought it might be useful for the election?'

'We mustn't examine father's actions like that,' she said. 'How I hoped he wouldn't touch the thing at all! But he has had to put himself in the hands of his agent—that little Mr. Quale, whom I expect you saw, with the little black moustache and white waistcoat—and I never liked him. In politics all kinds of tricks seem to be allowed—tricks that I hope you will always think low. Poor father! But remember that he has always been the best of fathers to you. Now go to bed, dear. To-morrow will be a terrific day, and we shall want all the sleep we can get.'

But it was long before Rudd, on the drawing-room sofa, slept. He had visitations of shame that kept him restless and nervous: for his father, most of all; for his mother; for himself. In some vague way for Liberalism

too. A wise man would never have put himself in such a position. If a man like his father could afford ten pounds for a hospital in November, he could have afforded it at the time he gave only that miserable guinea. To a hospital, too, for poor people! Gladstone, Bright, Fawcett—they wouldn't have done that!

He heard carriage-wheels and the hall full of men's loud voices. Lord William Ruse was laughing. Then the smoking-room door banged.

Rudd was glad he had not to say good night to them.

Falling uneasily to sleep at last, he dreamed of barristers with confident smiles and strong white teeth, into whose cage his father and himself were being thrust; and with their hot breath scorching him, he woke in terror.

Mr. Sergison was defeated by a large majority, and Rudd took the news back to school on the day following the poll.

'You should have let me come and help,' Pascoe said.

BEFORE AND AFTER

IN passing some little while ago through the street which connects St. Martin's Lane, by Aldridge's, with Cambridge Circus—I believe it is called West Street—I noticed that a new building was being erected. Glancing through the opening in the hoarding I could see the bare bones of a theatre—the iron framework of the proscenium, the foundations of the stalls, and so forth; so that as one stood there one was on this side of who shall say how much excitement and fun,

how much of that blend of mirth and thrills which makes a theatrical night's entertainment? To-day the place is a wilderness; to-morrow crowds will be gathered there. How bright will be the lights, how gay the music, how the walls, now mere skeletons, will echo and re-echo to laughter and applause!

All new building is exciting, but there is something peculiarly attractive in the thought that this great hole in the ground, when ultimately enclosed by its bricks and mortar and decoration, will be a friendly playhouse.

What so cheerless as iron girders and scaffold poles? What so enkindling as the overture to a play in a crowded, anticipatory theatre?

As I stood in the opening of the hoarding thinking these thoughts and becoming every moment an object of deeper suspicion to the special constable who had strolled down the street from the big electricity works which he guards, it was borne in upon me that I had not so very long ago witnessed the very antithesis of the present scene. I say not so very long ago, meaning distance in time; only a year and a half. But in history a distance vast indeed; for that was before the war, in the spacious days when travellers could leave England on an impulse, as they can no more, and passports were seldom needed, and France was gay, and Italy was careless, and Louvain had a library, and the streets of London were lighted at night. Strange, remote Utopian period!

At that time, a year and a half ago, when I had so different a spectacle before my eyes, I was in that beautiful land now also under arms, where even decay is lovely too—I mean, of course, Italy—and the particular part of Italy was the brown city of Verona, at which I was stopping for a few hours on the way

from Venice, in order to see the ruins of the Roman theatre there.

These ruins can very easily be overlooked by travellers, for several reasons. One is that the lure of the Coliseum is so powerful; another, that the wonderful church of S. Zeno must first be visited, and there is then often little time for anything else but the tombs of the Scaligers and poor Juliet's reputed last earthly tabernacle. The Roman theatre, moreover, is rather out of the way; and, well, is not the Coliseum Roman theatre enough? So you see how easy it is not to do Verona full justice. And a further obstacle to the examination of the theatre's ruins is that they demand agility and endurance in no meagre supply, for one has to climb to great heights, and leap chasms, and descend perilously, like a mountain goat. And Verona is usually exceedingly hot.

Yet no one visiting Verona should miss this ghost of a playhouse, for, having seen it, another gap in one's mental picture of Roman civilization is filled. It is there possible to visualize the audience arriving, traversing the long passages in search of their seats, recognizing their friends, jesting in their saturnine way, and then sitting down to the joys of the performance. Terence and Plautus at Westminster thereafter become twice as interesting.

Ruined as it is, the theatre yet retains enough for the imagination to build upon, and it illustrates, too, the stationary character of dramatic architecture. Upon the ancient scheme our modern erectors of theatres have grafted only trifling inessential modifications; the main lines are the same. Possibly, if anything, there has been a decline, for one thinks of a Roman architect as being thorough enough to test the view of the stage from every point of the house, whereas in England

there are, I am sure, architects who have never thought it worth while to visit the gallery.

Given the opportunity of mingling in some supernatural way with a crowd of the past there would be many selections as to the most thrilling moment. This one would choose the occasion of Marc Antony's oration over Cæsar's body, that the execution of Robespierre; a third would vote for a general's triumph in Athens; a fourth for Nelson's funeral at St. Paul's; and still another, greatly daring, might name a certain trial scene in Jerusalem. These, however, represent the choice of the specialists in human emotions and historic frissons. Many of the more ordinary of us would, I conjecture, elect to join the crowd of the past at the play; for what, they would hold, could be more interesting than to make one of the audience at the first night of *Hamlet*, or *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, or *Cato*, or *She Stoops to Conquer*, or *The School for Scandal*? Whether the differences or resemblances to ourselves would be the more striking is a question; but I fancy the resemblances. And I fancy that such would still be the case could one be spirited back across the centuries and be set down in this Verona theatre at some gala performance. For human nature's reluctance to change is never more manifest than in the homes of the drama, and the audience in this embryonic playhouse in the London street and the audience in that crumbling abode of lizards beneath the burning sun of Verona would probably be astonishingly alike.

THE WORST PRELUDE TO ADVENTURE[1]

LONDON is never so exciting as on May nights. The other evening I was forced into attending a debate: a thing I had not done for years. Never mind what the subject was, but one speaker after another got up—a few in reply to the last speaker, but most merely to deliver some remarks prepared even earlier (if possible) than the last speaker had prepared his. And so it went on, and then there was a show of hands, something was carried, something lost; and I found myself under the May stars with the sweetness of the May night all about me.

It was not very late; I was in no hurry to go to bed; and the evening's rhetoric, so futile, when all is said, because only academic and leading no whither, had aroused in me a mood of revolt. To think that we should have been sitting there arguing in a stuffy room, when we might have been high on Hampstead Heath; or in the garden of the Spaniards; or smelling the lilacs of Holland Walk; or, at ease, on the crazy green balcony of the Angel at Rotherhithe, watching the river lights and the stealthy nocturnal shipping. Or we might have been merely in London's streets under the May stars.

It infuriated me. 'I have lost an evening,' I said, 'and a May evening at that; and life is so devilish short.' And so saying I pulled myself together and added, 'But no matter—here you are, with a latchkey and an open mind: have an adventure!'

It was then about a quarter-past eleven. At one o'clock I was nearing home, weary and disheartened, asking myself the question, 'Who are the people who

[1] From *Loiterer's Harvest.*

have adventures?' and answering it, 'Those who cannot appreciate them.' And then I asked, 'How is it that I, spoiling for an adventure, have had none?' and the answer was, 'For two reasons—one, your self-conscious receptivity: it is the unexpected that happens; and, two, only an ass would ever dream of having an adventure.' And then I asked, 'This being so, why on earth did I prepare the way for an adventure at all? Why didn't I know that they don't occur?' And the answer was, 'Books.'

It is books that do the mischief. Without books we should know life for the humdrum thing and imposture it is, even in London on a May night. And even as it is, we know it; but books make us forget what we know. Books are in our blood. No one who begins bookishly ever becomes quite free again. There they are, all the time, in the background, dominating conduct and providing standards, ideals, limitations, and, above all, illusions and disappointments. For the books that one reads in the impressionable years, and therefore absorbs and remembers, are always so much better and more exciting than life.

Ballantyne, for example, who came first—what chances his boys had that were never ours! Coral islands to be cast away upon; fur-trading; gorilla-hunting—you see the mischief of it all! Then Haggard, Stevenson, Defoe, Scott, Dickens. These are the corrupters of youth. One comes away from them for ever expecting something, where one might, without them, have been merely acquiescent and at peace. For they all heighten; they all arrange life their own way and sauce it. Dickens comes nearest to the life that one knows: one continually meets characters with a vague Dickensian flavour; but the breath of genius is not in them. They are the shells only: the great, comic, humane, living, unreal

fairy-land spirit has not animated them. It never can: it began with Dickens and passed with him. Disappointment again!

But on my way home that night it was Stevenson whom I felt to be the first of the traitors: Stevenson, who brought Bagdad to London (the low trick!), and, since Bagdad is not really London, spoiled life for thousands of us. How often have I invented New Arabian Nights for myself! I suppose all that ever tasted that seductive poison have done so. The taxi chauffeur who invites one to ride free to the mysterious house. The anonymous, agonized gentleman who stops me in the street imploring me to witness his will or perform some other service, to be followed not long after by the receipt of the lawyer's letter (always a lawyer's letter!) that carries the news of fortune. The note dropped from the barred upper window behind which the beautiful girl is incarcerated. The veiled lady with the bloodhound. . . .

On a May night of stars in London how one can play with, elaborate, and perfect such *motifs*! In the adventure of the agonized gentleman who requires a signature, for example, he stands at the gate in the small hours, counting the infrequent passers-by, his object being to invite the seventh. Perhaps it is not himself for whom he is acting, but for some strange sinister employer, bed-ridden, at death's door, upstairs. An old woman, maybe, masterful, cunning, but helpless, who cannot spare this factotum, but must have a life-and-death message carried at once. It is I who carry it. Perhaps it is written; perhaps it is verbal; curious cryptic words which, when I say them to the person they are intended for, cause him to blanch and quail.—Every one has these dreams of romantic interludes in the drab monotony of city-life; but they come to nothing.

Adventures, such as they are, fall only to those who have forgotten the story-writers or never knew them.

As to how similar the ideas of exceedingly dissimilar persons can be, even when they are deliberately fantastic, I have an instance only too pat. It has long been a favourite whim of mine that a mirror should be invented capable of retaining every reflection it had ever recorded and giving them back when desired. A little while ago I picked up *Passages from the American Note-books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, and found the same idea jotted down for use one day in a romance. This book, by the way, is a mine of suggestions for the story-writers, for Hawthorne had more thoughts in a day than he could use in a year; and many of them are here.

And so, turning the key, I bade farewell to the May stars, and did one of the most adventurous things left to us—I went to bed. For no one can lay a hand on our dreams. All the authors of the world cannot spoil those.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

'DO you believe in magic?' Jack asked.

I hedged.

'Well, whether you do or not,' he said, 'I've got a rather rum story for you.'

'Go ahead,' I replied.

'Very well,' he said. 'It was on last Tuesday morning that I looked in at the watchmaker's to see if my watch was mended yet.

'It was hanging up in the glass case above the bench where he worked, with my name on a little tab attached to the ring.

' " No," the man said, " it 's not done—in fact, I 'm still observing it."

' " But it seems to be recording the time all right," I said.

' " Yes," he replied—" seems, but it isn't. That 's mere chance. Do you know, it 's so fast that it 's gained exactly twenty-four hours since you brought it in. That 's not to-day's time it 's registering, but to-morrow's. Leave it here another week, and I 'll have got to the bottom of the mystery."

' At first I was disposed to do so ; and then I had an idea.

' " No," I said, " I 'll take it."

' " But it 's useless to you," he replied.

' " I 'll take it," I said. " Just for fun."

' He gave it me reluctantly and returned to his labours.

' I walked away from the shop very thoughtfully. Here was a curious state of things. I and the rest of the world were living on Monday, February 9, while my watch was busily recording, a little too hurriedly, the progress of time on Tuesday, February 10. To see into the future has ever been man's dearest wish, and here was I in possession of a little piece of machinery which actually was of the future and yet could tell none of its secrets.

' But couldn't it ? Couldn't I wrest one at least from it ?—that was what worried me.

' As I pondered, a newspaper boy passed me bearing the placard " Selections for Lingfield," and in a flash I bought one. My watch knew who had won ! How could I extract that information from it ? '

Jack paused.

' Good heavens,' I interpolated, ' what an extraordinary situation ! '

' You may well say so,' he said. ' You see, if only I

could share its knowledge, I should be rich for life; for it was now only a quarter to eleven, and the first race was not till one-fifty, and there was plenty of time to bet.

'But——

'I continued on my way deep in thought,' Jack sent on, 'when whom should I meet but Lisburne? Lisburne is the most ingenious man I know.

'"Come and advise me," I said, and led him to a quiet corner.

'"It 's jolly interesting," he remarked, when I had finished, "but of course it 's black arts, you know, and we 've lost the key nowadays. Still we must try."

'We discussed the thing every way, in vain.

'Then suddenly he said, "Look here, this watch represents to-morrow. That means it is through the watch that we must work. Here, let 's get to-day's *Mail* and read it through the watch-glass and see if there 's any difference?"

'We got it and did so.

'Lisburne removed the glass, found the racing news and read them through it. "Good heavens!" he said, and turned white. "Here, read this with your naked eye," he said, pushing the paper before me.

'I read "Saturday's racing results: 1.30, Midas 1, Blair Hampton 2, Chessington 3," and so on. "Prices, Midas 6-4," etc.

'"Those are Saturday's results,' he said, shaking with excitement. "But now read them through the watch-glass."

'I did so, and they immediately changed to Monday's results. I was reading to-morrow's paper!

'"Look at the prices," he cried.

'The prices! I hastily ran through them. They were splendid. "Captain Farrel 10-1, Woodpark 10-1,

Flitting Light 4-1." "And these horses, remember," he said, " are going to run this afternoon ! "

' " What 's the next thing to be done ? " I gasped.

' " The bookies," he replied.

' " I suppose they 're fair game," I said.

' " Of course," he replied. " The very fairest. But that 's nothing to do with you, anyhow. You 're in possession of magic and must employ it. They are the natural medium. How much can you muster ? "

' " I 'd risk anything I could scrape up," I said. " Say £750. And you ? "

' " Oh, I 'm broke," he replied. " How many bookies do you know ? "

' " Three," I said.

' " Well," he replied, " I know three more, and we can find men who know others, and who will bet for us. Because we must plant this out warily, you know, or they 'll be suspicious."

' " Will you take it in hand," I asked, " leaving me £150 for my own commissions ? "

' " Of course," he said, " if you 'll give me ten per cent " ; and having copied out all the longer priced winners through the watch-glass he hurried off, promising to meet me at lunch.

' How to get through the intervening time was now the question. First I went to the telegraph office, and then to the barber's to have my hair cut. Forcibly to be kept in a chair was what I needed. The hair-cut took only half an hour ; so I was shaved ; then I was shampooed ; then I was massaged ; then I was manicured. I should have been pedicured, but the clock mercifully said lunch time.

' Lisburne was there in a state of fever. He had distributed the £600 among fourteen different commission agents.

'"Now we can have lunch," he said, "with easy minds."

'Easy!

'"But suppose the whole thing is a fizzle," I said. "We 've been far too impetuous. Impulse was always my ruin."

'"Oh no," he said.

'"But if it 's a fizzle," I said, "what about my £750?"

'"It won't be," he replied. "It 's magic. Let 's order something to eat."

'He ate; that is the advantage of being on ten per cent commission. I couldn't.'

Jack paused.

'Go on,' I said. 'Did the horses win?'

'Every one,' he replied.

'At those prices?'

'Yes.'

'Then you 're frightfully rich?'

'No,' he said.

'Why ever not? Surely the bookies haven't refused to pay?'

'Oh no.'

'Then why aren't you rich?'

'Because I did the usual silly thing—I woke up.'

EVA LASKER[1]

THERE was no bridesmaid whom Rudd felt in danger of himself leading to the altar, but Eva Lasker was quite amusing at lunch.

More than amusing: attractive, Rudd thought. She had a mass of brown hair and slender white hands. Her mouth was pretty too, and her voice rich and vibrating. Her age was in reality thirty, but she had all the machinery of twenty-five.

Rudd asked her if she too wrote, and she admitted that she had dabbled.

'But my efforts,' she said, 'are the merest rubbish. Now yours . . . ! I am sure you write the kind of things I want written.'

'Why?'

'Well, you look as if you do. There 's penetration in your eyes; you seem to see right inside.'

Rudd liked her.

'And then,' she continued—'but you 'll think I am horribly noticing——'

'Not at all; what then?'

'Why, your hands. They 're very interesting. You see, I 've studied palmistry. I 've got a certificate for it.'

'You don't really believe in that sort of thing?' Rudd asked.

'Of course I do,' she replied. 'It 's an exact science. I know.'

'Do you mean to tell me that our characters are written in the lines of the hands?' Rudd said, with a laugh.

'Why not?' she replied. 'That 's not more remarkable than many other things about us. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. But undoubtedly our

[1] From *Landmarks*.

characters are written there. And more too. Not only our characters but our whole lives, past, present, and future.'

'You can prophesy as well?' said Rudd.

'Yes,' replied Miss Lasker, 'but as a matter of fact we're not allowed to. Now just lay your right hand on the table for a moment, palm upwards.'

She bent a comely head over it for a second, and half whistled. 'Most interesting,' she murmured, partly to herself. 'But then,' she added, 'we're not talking right at all. We ought to be discussing plays or books,' and she laughed brightly.

'You've shaken me,' said Rudd. 'I always felt that these sort of things—phrenology, chirop—I mean palmistry—were just fakes. Now the only thing I really want is to have my hands read. Mayn't I?'

'We can't do it here,' said Miss Lasker. 'Some time of course I should love to read them.'

Later they played the game, and touched upon books: their favourite authors. What would lunch or dinner parties be without these useful fellows?

Miss Lasker confessed to a recent passion for Tourguéniev. Rudd must read him too. Rudd said that he would, and she offered to lend him one.

Would he have a French translation or an English?

English, Rudd thought. Yes, English. He would be delighted to accept the loan.

'You'll be sure to let me have it back?' she said. 'Book borrowers, you know. The sad sad gaps in my shelves!'

Rudd promised.

Who were the best novelists? was a question they then debated.

The great name of Dickens came up; but Miss Lasker demurred and lost her vivacity.

'Don't you like Dickens?' Rudd asked.

She opened her eyes a little hopelessly. 'Do you know I 'm awfully sorry, and I know it just puts me clean out of court; but I never could read him.'

'It 's your loss,' said Rudd.

'So I 'm always told,' she replied.

'Why don't you try again?' Rudd asked. 'If I sent you *David Copperfield* would you promise to try?'

'Of course I would,' said Miss Lasker. 'But I don't think I could let you spend money on me like that.'

'Shall I steal it for you, then?' Rudd asked. 'For I mean to send it; that is, if you give me your address.'

'I 'll accept it,' said Miss Lasker, 'on one condition.'

'Well?'

'That you don't send it, but bring it.'

'Very well,' said Rudd, and added that he would bring his hands with him too.

He now had to talk to the bridesmaid on the other side, who was not interesting, for she talked solely about herself.

A few days later, on the afternoon appointed, Rudd called at the house in Queen's Gate and was ushered into a small room where Miss Lasker was seated.

She rose as he entered and met him half-way.

'You look tired,' she said, scanning his face anxiously. 'You 've been overworking.'

Rudd was perfectly sure that he had not, but her solicitude pleased him. He passed his hand wearily over his forehead. 'Life *is* tiring,' he said.

'Yes, indeed,' she replied. 'Especially to brain-workers. They give out so much all the time.'

She turned to make the tea, and Rudd, trying to talk like a brain-worker who had been giving out too much, glanced round the room. It was a blend of cosiness and culture. The chairs were comfortable, the fire was ample and active; on the walls were Arundel Society reproductions and autotypes, and the many

shelves were full of books, which turned out, on closer inspection, to be the right books—that is to say, Stevenson, Pater, Hardy, Meredith, Henry James, and so forth. These were in sets. There were no discoveries.

'Have you read all these?' Rudd asked.

'Oh yes, many times! My dear books!' she said. 'What a solace! what friends!'

'No Dickens, of course!' said Rudd.

'We have them,' she said. 'But they're in father's den. He loves them.'

Rudd presented his parcel, and they settled down to tea.

Miss Lasker, it seemed, like Miss Dewsberry of horrid memory (Rudd could not get her out of his mind at all at the moment), had a little room of her own and a circle of her own friends. Upstairs was a mother who had been perfectly trained to keep her place.

'I hope you'll dine with us soon,' said Miss Lasker, 'and then you will meet her. Father too. But there's no need to see either to-day. To-day I want you all to myself. I want to know what you have been doing?'

'Nothing much,' said Rudd. 'Not what I ought to have been doing. Just journalism.'

'Oh, but you must,' said Miss Lasker. 'You ought to be writing a book. Sugar?'

'No, thank you.'

'A real book with yourself in it. Milk?'

'Yes, please. Only a very little.'

'Of course you must write a book. Bread and butter or toast? With a head and eyes like yours you must write a novel. Haven't you anything with you that I might see?'

'Nothing but some paragraphs in to-day's paper,' said Rudd.

'Oh, let me see those!' said Miss Lasker, all eagerness and impatience.

Rudd fetched *The Post-Meridian* from the hall, where he had left it, and directed her attention to his morning's labours.

She read them with flattering thoroughness.

'Of course you are a writer,' she said, as she finished. 'You have a flair. I can see it even in these little things. Straws tell how the wind blows, you know. Your phrasing is so epigrammatic and terse. Surely you write poetry?'

Rudd confessed that he had done so. Verse, at any rate.

Miss Lasker knew it. 'Won't you let me see something?' she asked again. 'Won't you make up a little parcel of your things and let me read them before you come again? That is, if you *will* come again,' she added.

Rudd said that he should be delighted to. She was really a very remarkable girl. Her intuition was wonderful, so swift and accurate. Fancy spotting that he had written verse.

'You were going to read my hand,' Rudd said, a little later.

She laughed. 'The converted sceptic!' she said gaily.

'I admit it,' said Rudd. 'No dreary consistency for me.'

'"The bugbear of little minds,"' Miss Lasker quoted.

What a clever girl! Rudd thought again.

'Won't you sit there facing me?' Miss Lasker said; and he did so.

She took up a magnifying glass and a slender penholder of jade, and bade him spread his palms outwards side by side.

'I 'm afraid they 're very dirty,' he said as he did so.

'Oh dear, I did hope you wouldn't say that,' Miss Lasker replied. 'All the men say that!'

Rudd felt humiliated. He had begun to think him-

self unique. He felt a tinge of jealousy too. How many infernal men's hands had she read ?

' But whereas most of the men's really are dirty, yours are beautifully clean,' Miss Lasker added, by way of solace.

She examined both palms through her glass in silence.

' Dear ! dear ! ' she said at last. ' I 'm afraid you haven't done quite so much with your life as you should. Still, you are young yet. How old are you ? '

' Twenty-five,' said Rudd.

' Twenty-five ! ' she exclaimed. ' When is your birthday ? '

' In October,' said Rudd.

' How very odd ! So is mine,' said Miss Lasker. ' Not the twelfth, is it ? '

' No, the tenth,' said Rudd.

' Well, that 's most amazingly near,' said Miss Lasker. ' To think that when you were a little boy of four, wherever you were, I was a little baby girl somewhere else, and twenty-one years later we should meet ! '

For some reason or other Rudd thought this extraordinary too, but reflecting upon it afterwards, he realized that it was a fairly normal beginning. There must always be infantile contemporaries in different places. Miss Lasker, however, with her jade stick, and her magnifying glass, and her proximity, and the touch of her hand as she moved his about, had made it seem supernatural.

' You see,' said Miss Lasker, pointing out a line in his left palm with the jade stick. ' This hand shows what we are born with ; the right shows what we make of ourselves. Now, look at this line. It indicates brain power. But see how much deeper it is in the left than the right. You haven't worked hard enough.'

Rudd admitted it.

'You have fine hands,' she said later, after another long scrutiny. 'Wonderful hands. And you 'll live for ever. Look at the line of life. But there 's some trouble ahead. The heart line is broken. See these little crosses '—the jade stick tickled his palm delightfully—' they mean trouble. You must be careful with your affections—you must keep them under control.'

By this time Rudd was in a mazy state, and as she went on his condition became more and more hypnotic, so that when she dropped his hands and rose, he almost reeled.

He was also a little intoxicated by the superb character which she had given him.

Miss Lasker, after a glance at the clock, dismissed him rather abruptly by fetching the Tourguéniev and handing it to him. 'Remember,' she said, 'I shall want your opinion of this next week. I am sure you will read it with peculiar insight.'

Rudd promised to read it at once, and took his leave.

On the doorstep he found a tall youth in a brown suit and a large felt hat. He had a green tie. Another of her friends, Rudd thought a little bitterly.

None the less, he walked across the park on air; he had found a muse.

That night Rudd looked out a few ewe lambs and posted them.

In the intervening week he thought about Miss Lasker from time to time. She was a good sort, he decided, and excellent company. She didn't bore him as that Dewsberry girl had done, and yet he was conscious of tiny suspicions. He could not help the feeling that she had said most of her things before. How many young geniuses did she discover every week? he wondered. Silly to be so wholesale.

None the less, when Thursday afternoon arrived,

Rudd was to be seen, rather more carefully dressed than usual, on Miss Lasker's doorstep.

She received him with graciousness and warmth.

'Let me see,' she said as she sat down to the tea-table, 'you take sugar and no milk, don't you? I like to remember these little idiosyncrasies.'

She was so pleased with her memory that Rudd could not undeceive her, and his tea nearly made him sick.

'Well,' he asked, 'what about Dickens?'

Miss Lasker looked at him piteously as though begging not to be thrashed.

'Haven't you read it yet?' Rudd asked.

'As much as I can,' Miss Lasker admitted.

'And you don't like it?'

'Oh, of course, here and there. One can't help it. But I'm afraid I'm hopeless. You must give me up. I warned you, you know.'

'But what about Mr. Micawber?' Rudd asked.

'A good comic figure, of course,' said Miss Lasker.

'Only that?' Rudd asked.

'It is all so overdrawn,' said Miss Lasker. 'Such caricatures.'

'But the bigness of it all!' said Rudd. 'The scale, the spirit!'

'They seemed to be able to do that quite easily, those Victorians,' Miss Lasker replied. 'I'm afraid I'm too modern for it all. I'm such a child of the age.'

'So am I, I suppose,' said Rudd. 'Yet I adore Dickens.'

'You'll grow out of that,' Miss Lasker again remarked.

'I hope not,' said Rudd. 'I hope to admire him more and more.'

Miss Lasker sighed. 'How splendid and loyal of you!' she said.

'Not a bit,' said Rudd, nettled.

'Oh yes, it is. You 're so chivalrous and kind. You hate to give up an old friend. But you 'll have to. Do you know something?'

'What?' Rudd asked. He was getting tired of this. He always hated argument, and he knew that the girl was wrong.

'I 'll tell you,' said Miss Lasker. 'There 's a thing of yours among that bundle you sent me which is worth all Dickens.'

'Good heavens!' cried Rudd. 'What do you mean?'

'It 's true,' she said. 'That tiny sketch called "The Crimson Madonna." That 's modern, if you like. It 's exquisite. It 's so full of atmosphere and feeling: imaginative sympathy, don't you know.'

Rudd was feeling genuinely miserable.

'Dickens could only knock about on the surface and make people laugh,' Miss Lasker went on, 'but this thing of yours—it 's so intimate, so understanding. It leaves him nowhere.'

Rudd was furious. He wanted nothing that she was giving him. He did not want butter on that scale, nor any butter at all at the expense of the real thing. He had enough power of self-criticism to know that Miss Lasker was being an ass.

All unconscious of his annoyance, she continued to babble forth her rapture; but Rudd was disgusted. He had had enough. He sat through another half-hour suffering acutely, and then collected his ewe lambs and left.

By a strange chance the tall sallow youth in the green tie was again on the doorstep waiting to be admitted. Thursday was evidently his afternoon too.

'You take her,' Rudd muttered.

THE BOURSE

WE were talking about the really difficult things of life.

'The most difficult thing I know,' said the plaintive man, 'is to pay a bill for 6s. 6d.,' and at once was started a discussion on money which revealed a number of curious peculiarities and unexpected grudgings.

'For 6s. 6d.,' the plaintive man continued, 'is too small a sum for a cheque, and that means facing all the appalling difficulties of the post-office. You know, I suppose, what post-offices are? The assistants on whose faces is written the knowledge that no amount of zeal over their sales can ever make any difference to them, as it no doubt does in such firms as that which writes the same article every day for all the evening papers; the unreadiness of any one to serve you; your own indecision as to where you ought to stand to be served; your reluctance to interrupt the assistant's private studies; the over-crowding; the under ventilation; and more than all this,' he went on, 'the horrid fact that a postal order has to be paid for, and 6s. 6d., while too small a sum for a cheque, is too large to be paid in cash; or rather it belongs to one of the groups of coins which I cannot bring myself to part with under a stiff wrench.

'No doubt every one has such groups. I know only too well what mine are. I am not generous or a spendthrift, but sums up to 3s. 6d. I can dispense without any noticeable twinges. Sums between a penny and 3s. 6d. are, when I have them, at the disposal of my friends, and I can even produce 3s. 6d. twice within a short period and not blench. Any of you men here who came to me at any time and said, "Lend me 3s. 6d.," would at

once get it: although I hope you won't ask. But I look very long at 5s. or 7s. They are sums I like to retain. I feel that I am the best caretaker for them. The odd thing is that my pocket can be depleted of small sums making up 7s. two or three times over; but I can't pay out 7s. in the lump. Yet ten-shilling notes, although I am never reckless with them, I can transfer from my own hand to another's without grief. Immediately after the ten shillings, however, I stop again. The idea of paying out 11s. 6d., say, or 12s. or 13s. 6d. or 14s. 6d. is intensely repugnant to me: all at once, I mean; I can do it piecemeal only too easily; but not at a blow. The thought of 11s. 6d. going bang is unendurable. Yet after 15s. I weaken again, but only if I pay in paper. For by that time one realizes that the game is up; the pound note is smashed and any change you get from it is all sheer profit. Hence I can pay 17s. 6d. for a thing with composure, because I am making half-a-crown out of the deal. But ask me to add together small coins to the amount of 17s. 6d. and see me refuse! Not to be done.

'But the pound note is the limit. After that I am incapable of paying in cash. It is then that the cheque-book begins its useful life. I can write a cheque without turning a hair for any amount between one pound and five; but after that my paying capacity ceases. All else is drawn from me only by torture, with blood and tears in its wake.'

The plaintive man paused. 'Such,' he said, 'is my currency creed.'

'I am not conscious,' said the thin man, 'of any of those distinctions and shades. To me money is a hardly won commodity which I consistently hate to transfer to others. Yet I have so far got over this objection that I do all day long pay it out in the ordinary course

of life. One thing, however, I cannot do: I cannot buy railway-tickets of over a pound. Hence I never leave the country. I simply cannot bring myself to do it. The Continent is closed to me; and a glance at the fares in the *A.B.C.* will show you in a moment what towns and villages I shall never see in my own land.'

'Well,' said the short man, 'I can pay for tickets all right; but what I hate paying for most is food. Because, of course, that 's wrong. Our food ought to be given to us. But of all food I most resent the price of apples. Apples, above all things, should be free. The idea of having to pay for an apple infuriates me, particularly in restaurants, where they are often sixpence each.'

'The measure of all men's generosity,' said the quiet man, who had not yet spoken, 'is their capacity to pay for fruit and flowers.'

'Well, personally,' said the stout man, 'I always think the height of illicit payment is reached in the charge made to enter Tattersall's ring. For obviously one should be paid to go there, since it exists only that one may be induced to part. I would go to any extreme to avoid paying that iniquitous pound.'

Record of that conversation reminds me of my own financial limitations. It is my destiny to be unable to sell anything. I can buy, but I cannot sell.

I will give you an example. Suppose that I want a dog. It matters very little what kind of a dog; but a dog. I ask advice and find that there is no dog so popular as a bob-tailed sheep-dog—blue, old English and so forth. 'Get a good one,' says the counsellor, and—this is all supposition, of course—I do so. There is no difficulty, not the least. The world is suddenly full of people with the best bob-tailed sheep-dogs to sell. I select a breeder, write to him, choose a particularly promising pup and send a cheque for him.

How much? Five guineas, let us say. Nothing is easier than this. I am on my own ground: I am buying.

Suppose next that after a couple of years, during which time the dog has been trained to work with the flock, I want to sell him. For any reason—he is too big, too clumsy, he breaks too many flowers, he eats too much money; or say that the shepherd who has trained him has left the neighbourhood and did not need him any more, and the dog moped when not in his company.

Say what you like: the point is that he has to go; that the time is ripe for me to become a seller—what then? You would fancy that the fashion in dogs not having changed in the interval, sheep-dogs were still marketable. Perhaps they are; but not mine. He cost five guineas, I said, when a pup. He is now trained and tried: surely he is worth eight? I advertise him at that and get no replies. I advertise again at six and get no replies. He has a pedigree, we will assume, a yard long. I advertise him at four and get no replies. I offer him to his original breeder, recalling the circumstances of the purchase, but he answers that he cannot trace the transaction and does not want to purchase, anyway. I advertise him at three guineas and receive two replies—both from shepherds: poor men, as they are careful to point out—offering one pound if he satisfies on trial. I offer to send him—both are, of course, living a long way off and the fare and trouble would cost five shillings—and neither replies again.

Then I advertise no more, but put the news about in the neighbourhood that a sheep-dog is for sale, and still I get no replies. I ask my friends if they want a dog, and all say No, except one man who would not mind one as a gift. The end of it is that the dog remains on my hands and continues to do damage and mope and eat money. Meanwhile the breeder from whom I bought

him is selling sheep-dogs all day long, and *The Exchange and Mart* is full of traffic in sheep-dogs. And mine is as good as any of them, and probably a good deal cheaper, but he will be on my hands for ever. And all because it is my destiny not to be able to sell—only to buy.

I chose a sheep-dog as an example because it is apt. But there are other things as striking. I can take a house with any man; but can I let it? No. I can buy shares; but can I sell them at anything but a loss? No. I buy old books, and their value instantly drops. I buy water-colours, and no one but myself has the faintest desire to possess them. And all the time I am meeting men whose sole activity in life is to pick up this and that bargain and reap fifty per cent on it. So diversified we are; so many of us are there to make up this little world.

WORDSWORTH *POUR RIRE*[1]

A NEW Wordsworth letter, dated November 17, 1844, printed recently, protesting against the projected railway through the Vale of Windermere, would seem to have been called forth by a footnote to the poet's sonnet of October in the same year beginning—

Is, then, no nook of English ground secure?

The footnote ran thus:—

The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent

[1] From *Loiterer's Harvest.*

tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. 'Fell it!' exclaimed the yeoman; 'I had rather fall on my knees and worship it.' It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

In the new letter Wordsworth adds that this tree's owner, Mr. William Birkett, 'furious at the thought of the railway going through his property,' is prepared to give £1000 to prevent the line.

But let us inquire a little deeper. Of Wordsworth's four railway sonnets, the 'Proud were ye, Mountains' is the best known:

> Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
> Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
> Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
> Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
> That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
> Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold.

That was in 1844. Yet see how the poet had written to Charles Lloyd, the Birmingham banker, in 1825:

'To come to the point at once, I have been led to consider Birmingham as the point from which the railway companies now forming receive their principal impulse, and I feel disposed to risk a sum—not more than £500—in purchasing shares in some promising company or companies. I do not wish to involve you in the responsibility of *advising* an investment of this kind, but I hope I do not presume too much when I request that you would have the kindness to point out to me what companies are thought the most eligible, adding directions as to the mode of proceeding in case I determine upon purchasing.'

The late J. K. S., it will be remembered, desiring once

again to parody Wordsworth, took the railway theme and (knowing nothing of the above letter) produced his piquant lines on 'The Insufficiency of Steam Locomotion in the Lake District,' of which here are two stanzas :

Bright Summer spreads his various hue
O'er nestling vales and mountains steep,
Glad birds are singing in the blue,
In joyous chorus bleat the sheep.
But men are walking to and fro,
Are riding, driving, far and near,
And nobody as yet can go
By train to Buttermere.

Wake, England, wake ! 'tis now the hour
To sweep away this black disgrace—
The want of locomotive power
In so enjoyable a place.
Nature has done her part, and why
Is mightier man in his to fail?
I want to hear the porters cry :
'Change here for Ennerdale !'

One does not draw attention to the inconsistency of Rydal Mount from any petty motive, but merely as an illustration of how pleasantly vulnerable our greatest may be. Wordsworth, also, it might be held, owes us a laugh now and then. In his lifetime he pleaded guilty to only one conscious joke, and when a man of advanced age who so understood his lowlier neighbours does that, we must find jokes for him. His joke, by the way, was this. He had been walking, he said, when a carter stopped him with the question, 'Have you seen my wife?' And what was the poet's gravity-removing reply? 'My dear sir,' he answered, 'I did not even know that you had a wife.' That is not exactly in the acceptable manner of Mr. Stephen Leacock; but it will do. Providence, however, came in and made it better; for

the American critic, Mr. William Winter, when a small boy, was taken to Rydal by his father on a pilgrimage to the Mount. While the elders sat in the garden, the little Winter was sent out to the poet with a message. 'Please, sir,' said he to the author of "The Excursion," 'your wife wants you.' 'You shouldn't say "your wife,"' replied the poet reprovingly; 'you should say "Mrs. Wordsworth."' 'But she *is* your wife, isn't she?' was the answer of astonished Young America.

And now for the very cream of Wordsworth's career as a humorist, which was sent to me by that inspired investigator of out-of-the-way printed matter, the late Mr. Bertram Dobell. It consists of a short article from the *Illustrated London News* of February 10, 1855, and if any one can read it aloud without collapse I envy his self-control. The conscious funny man never wrote anything that to my mind is droller. It runs thus:

'Our notice last week of the sister of William Wordsworth has afforded us an opportunity of hearing from the lips of a true poet an account of a visit which he made to Wordsworth. His story is in every way characteristic of the great author of "The Excursion"; and we have our friend's permission to tell it, but are not at liberty to mention his name.

'"In the summer of 1846, when on a visit to the Lake District, I called upon Mr. Wordsworth, to convey a message from his daughter, then in London. He received me with a kindly shake of the hand. 'I am told,' said he, 'that you write poetry; but I never read a line of your compositions, and I don't intend.' I suppose I must have looked surprised, for he added, before I could find time to reply, 'You must not think me rude in this, for I never read anybody's poetry but my own, and haven't done so for five-and-twenty years.' Doubtless I smiled. 'You may think this is vanity

but it is not ; for I only read my own poetry to correct its faults, and make it as good as I can.'

'"I endeavoured to change the subject by some general remarks on the beauty of the scenery visible from his garden, in which our interview had taken place. 'What is the name of that mountain?' I inquired. 'God bless me,' he said, 'have you not read my poems? Why, that's Nab-Scar. There are frequent allusions to it in my writings. Don't you remember the lines?' and he repeated in a clear, distinct voice a well-known passage from 'The Excursion.'

'"The name of Southey having been accidentally mentioned, I inquired as a matter of literary history whether, as was commonly believed, he had impaired his health and his intellect by too much mental exertion, and thus brought on that comparative darkness of mind which clouded the last months of his life. 'By no means,' said Wordsworth ; 'Southey was a most methodical worker. He systematized his time. He was never confused or in a hurry, and got through a deal of labour with an amount of ease and comfort which your hurry-scurry kind of people can neither accomplish nor understand. The truth is—at least, I think so—that his mind was thrown off its balance by the death of his first wife, and never afterwards wholly recovered itself.'

'"I reminded him at this point that the late Mr. Laman Blanchard, whose sad story was then fresh in the recollection of the public, had been reduced to a state of insanity by a similar bereavement. From that moment my name seemed to fade away from Mr. Wordsworth's recollection, and he always addressed me during the remainder of our interview as Mr. Laman Blanchard. His sister, Miss Wordsworth, was wheeled into the garden in a little garden-carriage, or chair, impelled by Mrs. Wordsworth. I wore on my head a Glengarry travelling-

cap, with a sprig of heather; and Miss Wordsworth no sooner caught sight of me than she exclaimed in a shrill voice, 'Who 's that man, brother?' 'Oh, nobody, my dear,' he replied. 'It 's only Mr. Laman Blanchard.' I gently hinted my right name. 'It 's all the same to her, poor thing,' he rejoined.

'"He would possibly have added more, but the unfortunate lady interrupted him by commencing to sing the well-known Scotch song—

> A Highland lad my love was born,
> The Lowland laws he held in scorn.

She sang one verse with much correctness, and was commencing another when Mr. Wordsworth led me away. 'This is a painful scene, Mr. Blanchard,' he said; 'let us go into my room, and I will read you some more passages from my poems about Nab-Scar.'"'

AUNTS

THE story is told that an English soldier, questioned as to his belief in the angels of Mons, replied how could he doubt it, when they came so close to him that he recognized his aunt among them? People, hearing this, laugh; but had the soldier said that among the heavenly visitants he had recognized his mother or his sister, it would not be funny at all. Suggestions of beautiful affection and touching deathbeds would then have been evoked, and our sentimental chords played upon. But the word aunt at once turns it all to comedy. Why is this?

I cannot answer this question. The reasons go back too far for me; but the fact remains that it has been decided that when not tragic, and even sometimes when tragic, aunts are comic. Not so comic as mothers-in-law, of course; not invariably and irremediably comic; but provocative of mirth and irreverence. Again I say, why? For, taken one by one, aunts are sensible, affectionate creatures; and our own experience of them is usually serious enough; they are often very like their sisters our mothers, or their brothers our fathers, and often, too, they are mothers themselves. Yet the status of aunt is always fair game to the humorist; and especially so when she is the aunt of somebody else.

That the word uncle has frivolous connotations is natural, for slang has employed it to comic ends. But an aunt advances nothing on personal property, an aunt is not the public resort of the temporarily financially embarrassed. No nephew Tommy was ever exhorted to make room for his aunt, a lady, indeed, who figures in comic songs far more rarely than grandparents do, and is not prominent on the farcical stage. One cannot, therefore, blame the dramatists for the great aunt joke, nor does it seem, on recalling what novels I can with aunts prominently in them, to be the creation of the novelists. Dickens has very few aunts, and these are not notorious. Betsy Trotwood, David Copperfield's aunt, though brusque and eccentric, was otherwise eminently sane and practical. Mr. F.'s aunt was more according to pattern and Miss Rachel Wardle even more so; but the comic aunt idea did not commend itself to Dickens whole-heartedly. Fiction as a rule has supported the theory that aunts are sinister. Usually they adopt the children of their dead sisters and are merciless to them. Often they tyrannize over a household. The weight of the novelists is in

favour of aunts as anything but comic. There are exceptions, of course, and that fine vivid figure, the 'Aunt Anne' of Mrs. W. K. Clifford, stands forth triumphant among the charming; while Sir Willoughby Patterne's twittering choruses are nearer the aunts of daily life. But even they were nigher pathos than ridicule.

I believe that that wicked military wag, Captain Harry Graham, has done more than most to keep the poor lady the aunt in the pillory. This kind of thing from his 'Ruthless Rhymes for Hearthless Homes' does a lot of mischief:

> In the drinking well
> Which the plumber built her,
> Aunt Eliza fell:
> We must buy a filter.

How can aunts possibly survive such subtle attacks as that? And again:

> I had written to Aunt Maud,
> Who was wintering abroad,
> When I heard she'd died from cramp:
> Just too late to save the stamp.

Supposing that the verse had begun

> I had written Cousin Maud

it would have lost enormously. There must be something comic in aunts after all.

No child ever quite gets over the feeling of strangeness at hearing his mother called aunt by his cousins. A mother is so completely his own possession, and she so obviously exists for no other purpose than to be his mother, that for her also to be an aunt is preposterous. And then there is the shock of hearing her name, for most children never realize their mother's name at all,

their father, the only person in the house who knows it intimately and has the right to use it, usually preferring 'Hi' or any loud cry. To Hamlet the situation must have been peculiarly strange, for his mother, after the little trouble with his father's ear, became his aunt too. If it were not that, since our aunts are of an older generation than ourselves, proper respect compels us to address them as aunts, they would not be comic. The prefix aunt does it; and not less so because some people perversely pronounce in the same way the name of that insect to whom the sluggard is bidden to resort. If we could call Aunt Eliza; Eliza, without ceremony, as if she were a contemporary, she would be no more joke to us than to her contemporaries, even though she did fall in the well and necessitate that sanitary outlay. Just plain Eliza falling in a well is nothing; but for Aunt Eliza to do so is a scream. It is having to say Aunt Eliza that causes the trouble, for it takes her from the realms of fact and deposits her in those of humour. If aunts really want to acquire a new character they must forbid the prefix.

THE ROGUES [1]

ARTISTS in fraud are always with us, but it is unusual to meet with three good examples in one week. Yet I have just done so. I had drifted into a billiard saloon in the West Central district, where there are many tables, including French ones without pockets, and I noticed two men playing. Their game was indifferent, but they themselves were so difficult to place

[1] From *Loiterer's Harvest.*

that I was interested. Not bookmakers and not dealers of any kind, but a type, distinctly Hebraic, between those callings. They were carefully dressed, but very common, and they had both time and money, for here they were idling as early as half-past four.

They left before I did; and passing out soon afterwards into a busy street I found myself looking into one of those shops, from which the windows and door have been removed, in order that sales by auction may be the more easily carried on in them. The auctioneer was shouting in the rostrum, and behold he was one of the billiard players! Pictures, busts, watches, jewellery and ornaments were the stock, and a gaudy pair of vases was being put up. There was hesitation in bidding, and at last a voice offered five shillings. After a few languid bids the vases were knocked down to this speculator, whom I could not see, for a pound.

'Some people think these sales are not genuine,' the auctioneer said, 'but I give you my word they are. Some say that these bids are made by our own friends, just to encourage the others; but it is untrue. You, sir,' he added, turning to the successful bidder, 'you have never seen me before, have you?'

We all looked toward the gentleman in question, and a displacement of heads permitted me to see him clearly.

'You 've never seen me before, have you, sir?' the auctioneer inquired again.

'Never,' said the man.

It was the other player in the game of billiards.

That was on a Thursday. The next day I met by chance an old acquaintance in whose curiosity-shop in the seaside town that I was now visiting again, I had, twenty and more years ago, spent far too much time, drawn thither partly by a natural leaning towards pictures and books and pottery and all the other odds and

ends which come from every corner of the earth and all ages, to make up the stock-in-trade of such places, but more by the personality of the dealer. Nominally he was a goldsmith and jeweller, as every great artist in Italy used to be, but actually he was an amusing loafer. He sat at a little vice, with a file in his hand, and did nothing but talk. He passed his fingers through his bushy iron-grey locks, glanced at the reflection of his bright eyes and ruddy cheeks in the mirror—there was always a mirror—and talked. His pet illusion was that he was Byronic. He had for revealed religion a scorn which he thought Byronic, although it was really of the brand of Foote and Taxil; he had for the moral code a contempt which he thought Byronic, although it was merely the most ordinary self-indulgence. But Byron having been loose in such matters, he was looser with a greater courage. He had a mischievous, sardonic view of the world which he thought was Byronic, but which was quite genuine and belonged to his nature. Nothing gave him so much pleasure as to watch the swindlers of his secondary profession at work. We used to discuss poetry and painting, but above all the riddle of life, and on his part always destructively. It was a very school for cynicism, this little shop, where nothing, so far as I knew, was ever sold, and I was the only habitué. He had an adopted niece, aged about seven—a pert, pretty little creature whom he spoiled utterly; he had a complaining wife who had no patience with his treatment of his niece, his Byronic airs, his verbose sloth or his prevailing gaiety, and affected none. He also had a retinue of complacent servant-girls whom his tropes and flashy theories delighted.

Such was my Byronic friend in 1887 to about 1890; and I must confess not often to have thought of him since; and then last week, on this flying visit to my old

town, I saw him again. He was bending over a portfolio, but I knew his back at once. His hair had become white and a little thinner; but everything else was the same: the ruddy cheek, the sparkling eye, always lighting up at the originality of some world-old denial or affirmation, the Byronic open collar, the Byronic necktie. He did not recognize me at first; but instantly afterwards we resumed the intercourse of twenty years before; although now it was I who was the older, not he. With him time had stood still. The only change in his talk was a tinge of embitterment, not that he had failed financially, but that his friends had left him. The complaining wife was dead, nor did his references to her dim his brilliant orbs; but his adopted niece—it was her and her husband's hostility to himself that he found such a pill. The old burden, 'After all I had done, too,' rolled out once more: that phrase which summarizes so much of man's dealings with man and perhaps more of woman's dealing with woman.

He soon checked himself, however, remembering my ancient tastes, and clutched my arm. 'What a world!' he chuckled—'what a world! I 'll show you something—something to interest you. It 's not far,' and he pulled me along to the window of an old picture-shop. 'Hush,' he said, 'be careful: walls have ears; but just look at that painting there, that portrait. What do you make of that?'

It was a woman's face, obviously eighteenth century, of the period, say, of Ramsay and Reynolds. She glimmered at us through layers of grime and blister. 'When do you think that was painted?' he asked.

'Oh, I don't know,' I said. '1780 perhaps.'

He doubled himself up with wicked joy. 'What a world!' he exclaimed. 'Three weeks ago! What a world!'

'Nonsense!' I replied.

'Truth,' he said. 'I know the painter.'

He again pulled my sleeve and we retired to a passage. He looked fearfully round and drew from his pocket a creased page of a magazine. It was an art magazine of recent date, and the plate represented another eighteenth-century lady. Underneath was printed 'Newly discovered Romney.'

He leaned against the wall and squirmed. 'Same man,' he gurgled at last. 'Same man. I watched him paint it. What a world! Lord, I don't want to die yet!'

PITY'S BILL COMES IN[1]

RUDD, having been calling on Mrs. Voaden at Hampstead, was walking down Fitzjohn's Avenue a little before seven, on his way to Swiss Cottage station, when a few yards ahead of him, through the dusk, he noticed a girl come out of the gate of one of the large houses and stand irresolute on the pavement, looking this way and that in dismal perplexity.

She was slight and graceful, and Rudd stopped to light a cigarette in order to observe her more closely.

After a few moments' irresolution, she made a little after-all-what-does-it-matter gesture and began to descend the hill with listless steps.

Rudd saw the whole thing in a flash. Her hat told him that she was a servant, and he realized that she was probably from the country, that this was her evening out, and she had nowhere to go and no one to go with. A wave of pity for her and all her class thus

[1] From *Landmarks*.

stranded swept over him, and in a moment he was at her side.

'Excuse me,' he said, joining her and taking off his hat.

She turned a half-alarmed wistful little face towards him.

'Yes,' she gasped, 'what is it?'

'Please don't be frightened,' Rudd said, 'please don't; but—could I do anything for you?'

'No, no,' the girl hurriedly replied. 'Why should you?' she added.

'Well,' said Rudd, 'I don't know why, but I was afraid you 're not very happy and I thought perhaps you would let me look after you a little.'

She drew back. Old stories of London and its wicked ways were crowding into her memory.

'Please don't be frightened,' he repeated. 'I 'll go right away at once if you wish it. Only I had a sort of idea that you had the whole evening in front of you and didn't know how to spend it.'

She looked at him in surprise. 'How did you know?' she asked.

'I just guessed it,' he said, 'and I thought perhaps you might care to go to a music-hall or theatre. . . . I 'm free too, you see. But I 'm frightening you. It 's all right, I 'll go on. Good night.'

'Oh no,' said the girl. 'You 're very kind,' she added. 'Are you sure you only guessed it?'

She looked at him searchingly, and he was aware of pure grey troubled eyes of liquid candour.

'Honour bright,' Rudd said. 'It wasn't so very difficult. You looked a little as though you were from the country and lost in London, you know. Now, then, is it a bargain? Shall I take care of you just for this evening?'

'But you 're a gentleman,' she said simply.

'I hope so,' said Rudd.

'And I 'm only a servant,' she added.

'Oh,' said Rudd, who had not quite taken her meaning and always hated class distinctions, 'if it comes to that, we 're all servants. I know *I* am. I have to begin work at nine every morning. But this evening I 'm free, and I know so well what it is to be lonely in London. I 'm from the country too. But look here. I know what you thought, for a moment at any rate. You thought I was one of those swine who walk about waiting to find girls alone. To prove I 'm not, and merely felt an impulse to try and make you a little happier, here 's five shillings. Do take it, like a good girl, and go to a pit somewhere, and I 'll run on.'

'Oh no, I couldn't,' said the girl; 'I can't go to plays alone. I don't care for them alone. Besides, I have to be in by ten.'

'Very well, then,' said Rudd, 'let me look after you till ten.'

And the girl prettily acquiesced.

No sooner had she done so than he wondered why on earth he had been so foolish as to speak to her at all, but having now begun he continued.

They got on a bus at Swiss Cottage and bowled down to Baker Street, talking with some difficulty the while.

The girl's name was Rose. She came from Norwich and had been in her present place only three weeks. She had an attractive East Anglian accent.

Rudd was wondering where he could possibly take her, for the necessity of her early return put any play out of the question, and a music-hall seemed rather silly, for this was before the days of the two-performances-a-night system, and the convenient cinema was not yet.

And then he caught sight of Madame Tussaud's and proposed that.

'Oh yes,' Rose said, 'I've always heard about Madame Tussaud's. I'd like to go there.'

They went first to a little Italian restaurant close by, in Baker Street; but the meal was a failure, for Rose refused to drink anything, either from the vestiges of suspicion or because she was a teetotaller, and Rudd, who wished himself miles distant, had difficulty in knowing what to say. Norwich was useful for a few minutes, as he had once been there for an afternoon; but the Norwich which interested him—the Norwich, that is, of Borrow—did not exist for her. They met, however, on common ground in the Cathedral and its Close, and again in the market-place; but there parted once more.

Of books she knew nothing, and he did not like to ask her much about her present employers; but she talked freely of her family, her married sisters and so forth.

'What would you have done if I hadn't been so rude and spoken to you?' Rudd asked.

'You weren't rude,' she said, 'you were very kind. I don't know why you should be so kind. I should have walked about, and looked in the shops in the Edgware Road, and bought some sweets, and then have walked back again.'

'You must make some friends,' Rudd said.

'I expect I shall in time,' she replied.

'But how dull for you,' he said, 'until you do!'

'It's all right,' she said simply, and again he marvelled at the calm acquiescence in monotony that women can display.

At Madame Tussaud's they got on better. Here Rose quickly showed signs of animation. The great brightly lit galleries, the handsome costumes, the

imposing personages counterfeited—all these delighted her.

'Isn't it wonderful?' she said again and again. 'Fancy being among all these kings and queens and grand people!'

Before the Sleeping Beauty she gripped Rudd in a moment of excitement at the marvel of mechanical respiration, and after that he held her arm as he piloted her from one figure to another and explained who they were.

'That 's President Carnot,' he said, and related the circumstances of his assassination.

'They 're all murdered, French Presidents, aren't they?' Rose asked.

Royalties pleased her most, and she would have given Tennyson in his study no second glance but for hearing that he also was an East Anglian.

'Born at Somersby, was he?' she exclaimed. 'Why, that 's where my Aunt Clara used to live,' and she returned and studied the poet's lineaments.

'Isn't it extraordinary?' she said again and again. 'Fancy Aunt Clara belonging to the same place! I shan't forget that in a hurry.'

Poor Sala might never have existed.

Rudd was not bored now. He was not only conscious of amusement in thus introducing a country girl to the celebrities of the world, but furthermore he saw an article in it; for it was his first visit to the waxworks too. The evening was not wholly thrown away.

On each of the statesmen, soldiers, orators, Rudd said a few words.

'What a lot you know!' Rose exclaimed.

What a lot any of us can know, Rudd thought, if we are in the right company.

'Not really,' he said aloud.

'Oh yes. You 're clever!' Rose replied. 'You 're not in a shop, I 'm sure.'

'No,' said Rudd, 'not exactly.'

'Tell me what you do,' Rose said.

Rudd told her that he was a journalist, and he had to name the paper, so that, should she ever require one, she might buy that.

'Is your name put to what you write?' she asked.

'No,' said Rudd, but he had to say what it was, none the less. He had no time to invent one.

In the Chamber of Horrors she was wide-eyed and a little clinging; and then apologetic. Details of the French Revolution impressed her shudderingly; she had never heard them before; but she could tell Rudd more about one or two of our native murderers than he knew.

'Well,' said Rudd as they drew near the house in Fitzjohn's Avenue, 'have you had a pleasant evening?'

'Very,' she replied.

'And I wasn't a monster after all! Still,' he added, you must be careful of strange men in the streets, you know.'

'I know,' she said. 'I think,' she went on, when they were fifty yards from her gate, 'you had better leave me here.'

'Very well,' said Rudd, putting out his hand. 'Good night.'

Rose looked at him shyly, with the ghost of an invitation in her little white face.

Rudd's heart beat faster, but he did not move.

Rose took his hand and shook it limply.

'Good night,' she said, 'and thank you,' and she moved off.

I wonder if she wanted me to kiss her, Rudd thought, as he descended the hill. I wonder if she expected it. I wish I knew more about them.

I 'm glad I didn't kiss her, he thought later. That would have made me just like the others. It wouldn't have been playing the game.

I did play the game, he assured himself. Yet he had held her arm in Madame Tussaud's. But that was only friendliness, he assured himself.

A fortnight later Rudd found at the office the following letter. It was written in a cramped hand on pink paper with a coloured device of flowers stuck on it.

'DEAR MR. SERGISON,—Forgive me for writeing to you but I should so dearly like to see you again. I have not been able to do what you said and make frends and my evenings out are more lonely than ever after the lovely evening we had together. I hope you do not mind my sending this to your newspaper but I had no other address and felt that I could not go any longer without seeing you again. I shall be at Swiss Cottage from six thirty to seven hopeing for you on Thursday, and again next Thursday, so do come on one of them.—Your respectful and affectionate

'ROSE ADDISON'

'P.S.—You need not take me anywhere. I just want to see you.'

Rudd read and re-read this document.

To-morrow was Thursday. He decided not to go.

He retained this decision firmly until he had dined, which he did that evening rather more liberally than usual, and he then asked himself why he should not go.

Poor girl, he thought. The only decent thing to do was to see her and tell her that he could not see her again.

He woke in the night and decided firmly that it would be a very serious mistake to go.

In the morning he was convinced that to go would be foolish and wrong.

After lunch he came to the conclusion that he would go, but would not stay. Poor girl!

He bought a box of chocolates and was just leaving his rooms when Lavis entered.

'Hullo,' said Lavis, 'where are you going?'

Rudd's misgivings had returned and he welcomed the opportunity of a second opinion.

'Look here,' he said, and produced the letter. Lavis read it. 'You must tell me everything,' he then remarked. 'Promise that or I won't hear a syllable. In matters of this kind one must know all or nothing.'

'Very well,' Rudd said. 'There 's nothing to be ashamed of except a perfectly humane impulse,' and he told the story.

'You didn't kiss her?' Lavis inquired.

'No. I most carefully didn't.'

'Did you squeeze her hand?'

'No.'

'Nothing?'

'The only thing I did was to hold her arm for a few minutes at Madame Tussaud's, just to guide her from one figure to another.'

'Hm!'

'But that was only friendliness,' said Rudd.

'Only friendliness! That 's the trouble. Remember that one man's meat is another man's poison. What is mere friendliness to you can be electricity to another, especially when she is an ignorant country girl and a nice-talking, nice-mannered London gentleman devotes an evening to her. You 'll have to stop this, my friend; this self-indulgence masquerading as pity. Be

as pitiful as you like, but keep it to yourself. Don't go about injuring other people with it.'

'Injuring! I was trying to be kind.'

'No doubt, and you were kind; most mischievously kind. I don't question your motives: I only want you to see that virtues can need as much control as vices. They're first cousins, anyway. Consider what you have done. You see a girl in what strikes your idle fancy as a pathetic situation. In other words, she has an evening out and doesn't know how to spend it. Being at loose ends yourself, you force yourself upon her, with the result that she is now in love with you. Any friends in her own class that she might have made, she has lost, because you are her standard and they are below it. And now you are going about saying "Poor girl, poor girl!"'

'But what am I to do?' Rudd asked.

'Do? Nothing. Burn the letter and forget her.'

'But I can't bear to think of her waiting there for me and my never coming.'

'You'll have to think of it. That's your punishment. Luxurious self-indulgence must be paid for.'

'But the poor girl?'

'The poor girl will wait this Thursday and will wait next. Then she'll tell her story to a fellow-servant, and the fellow-servant will reply with a somewhat similar incident and the remark that no men are to be trusted, and the incident will gradually close.'

'Poor girl!' said Rudd.

But he had the strength of mind not to go to Swiss Cottage.

ON RECITATIONS

ALTHOUGH none of us knows what, when the time comes, we can do, to what unsuspected heights we can rise, we are fairly well acquainted with what we cannot do. We may not know, for example, what kind of figure we should cut in a burning house, and even less in a burning ship : to what extent the suddenness and dreadfulness of the danger would paralyse our best impulses, or even so bring out our worst as to make us wild beasts for self-protection. Terrible emotional emergencies are rare, and, since rehearsals are of no use, all that is possible is to hope that one would behave rightly in them. But most of us know with certainty what our limitations are. I, for instance, know that I cannot recite in public and that no circumstances could make me. There is no peril I would not more cheerfully face than an audience, even of friends, met together to hear me, and, worse, see me, on such an occasion. And by recite I do not mean the placid repetition of an epigram, but the downright translation of dramatic verse into gesture and grimace. The bare idea of such a performance fills me with creeping terror.

The spectacle of any real reciter, however self-possessed and decent, at his work, suffuses me with shame. I myself have in my brief experience of them blushed more for reciters than the whole army of them could ever have blushed for themselves. Even the great humane Brandram, when he adopted the falsetto which he deemed appropriate to Shakespeare's women, sent the hot tide of misery to my face, while over his squeaking in ' Boots at the Holly Tree Inn ' I had to close my eyes. Brandram, however, was not strictly a reciter

in the way that I mean: rather was he an actor who chose to do a whole play by himself without costumes or scenery. The reciters that I mean are addicted to single pieces, and are often amateurs (undeterred and undismayed by the grape-shot of Mr. Anstey's 'Burglar Bill'), who oblige at parties or smoking concerts. Their leading poet when I was younger was the versatile Dagonet, who had a humble but terribly effective derivative in the late Mr. Eaton, the author of 'The Fireman's Wedding,' and their leading humorist the writer of a book called *T Leaves*. Then came 'Kissing Cup's Race' (which Mr. Lewis Sydney on the stage and 'Q' in literature toiled so manfully to render impossible), and now I have no notion what the favourite recitations are, for I have heard none for a long time.

But from those old days when escape was more difficult comes the memory of the worst and the best that I ever heard. The worst was 'Papa's Letter,' a popular poem of sickly and irresistible sentimentality, which used to call out the handkerchiefs in battalions. The nominal narrator is a young widow whose golden-haired boy wishes to join her in writing a letter to his father. Since he cannot write she turns him into a letter himself by fancifully sticking a stamp on his forehead. He then (as I remember it) runs out to play, is knocked down by a runaway horse, and—

'Papa's letter is with God.'

Who wrote this saccharine tragedy I cannot say, but I once found the name of W. S. Gilbert against it on a programme. Could he possibly have been the author? The psychology of humorists is so curious. . . .

So much for the worst recitations. The best that I can recall I heard twenty-five years ago, and have only just succeeded in tracking to print. It was recited at a

Bohemian gathering of which I made one in a Fleet Street tavern, the reciter being a huge Scottish painter with a Falstaffian head. His face was red and truculently jovial, his hair and beard were white and vigorous. I had never seen him before, nor did I see him after; but I can see him now, through much tobacco smoke, and hear him too. Called upon to oblige the company, this giant unfolded himself and said he would give us James Boswell's real opinion of Dr. Johnson. A thrill of expectation ran through the room, for it appeared that the artist was famous for this effort. For me, who knew nothing, the title was good enough. With profundities of humour, such as it is almost necessary to cross the border to find, he performed the piece, sitting tipsily on the side of an imaginary bed as he did so. Every word told, and at the end the greatness of the Great Cham was a myth. For years afterwards I tried to find this poem; but no one could tell me anything about it. Here and there a man had heard it, but as to authorship he knew nothing. The Scotsman was no more, I discovered. Then last year appeared one who actually knew the author's name: Godfrey Turner, a famous Fleet Street figure in the 'sixties and 'seventies, and in time I met his son, and through him was piloted to certain humorous anthologies, in one of which, H. S. Leigh's *Jeux d'Esprit*, I found the poem. Like many of the best recitations, it does not read famously in cold blood, but as delivered by my Scottish painter it carried big guns. Here it is; but there seems to be an error in the beginning of the third stanza, unless Bozzy's muzziness is being indicated:

'Bid the ruddy nectar flow!'
I say, old fellow, don't you go.
You know me—Boswell—and you know
I wrote a life of Johnson.

Punch they've here, a splendid brew ;
Let's order up a bowl for two,
And then I'll tell you something new
Concerning Doctor Johnson.

A great man that, and no mistake.
To ev'ry subject wide awake ;
A toughish job you'd have, to make
A fool of Doctor Johnson ;
But everybody worth a straw
Has got some little kind of flaw
(My own's a tendency to jaw
About my poor friend Johnson).

And even that immortal man,
When he to speechify began,
No greater nuisance could be than
The late lamented Johnson.
Enough he was to drive you mad,
Such endless length of tongue he had,
Which caused in me a habit bad
Of cursing Doctor Johnson.

We once were at the famous 'Gate'
In Clerkenwell ; 'twas getting late ;
Between ourselves I ought to state
That Doctor Samuel Johnson
Had stowed away six pints of port,
The strong, full-bodied, fruity sort,
And I had had my whack—in short
As much as Doctor Johnson.

Just as I'd made a brilliant joke
The doctor gave a grunt and woke ;
He looked all round, and then he spoke
These words, did Doctor Johnson :
'The man who'd make a pun,' said he,
'Would perpetrate a larceny,
And punished equally should be,
Or my name isn't Johnson !'

I on the instant did reply
To that old humbug (by the bye,
You'll understand, of course, that I
Refer to Doctor Johnson),
'You've made the same remark before.
It's perfect bosh ; and, what is more,
I look on you, sir, as a bore !'
Says I to Doctor Johnson.

My much-respected friend, alas !
Was only flesh, and flesh is grass.
At certain times the greatest ass
Alive was Doctor Johnson.
I shan't go home until I choose,
Let's all lie down and take a snooze.
I always sleep best in my shoes,
All right ! I'm—Doctor Johnson.

Good as that piece was as done by the Scottish artist, I should not care to hear it again. Nor, indeed, do I want to hear any recitation again, unless it is given in mimicry of some one else. Under those conditions I could listen to anything, so powerful is the attraction of the mimic's art. Possibly part of this fascination may be due to one's own inability to imitate too ; be that as it may, no mimic who is at all capable ever bores me, and all fill me with wonder. Of course I am conscious that many of the imitators who throng the stage are nothing but pickpockets : too lazy and too mean to acquire novelties of their own, they annex snatches of the best songs of the moment under the plea of burlesquing the original singers. But even so, I often find myself immorally glad that they figure in the programme.

Not the least remarkable thing about good mimics is their capacity not only to reproduce the tones of a voice, but the actual style of conversation. I remember hearing a man gifted in this way giving a spontaneous impression of a famous scholar whom he had just met,

and the curious part of it was that the imitator, though a man of little education, for the moment, under the influence of the concentration which possessed him, employed words proper to his victim which I am certain he had no knowledge of in cold blood and had never used before. It was almost as if, for a brief interval, the mimic was the scholar, though always with the drop of ridicule or mischief added. It would be interesting to know if, when a man is being impersonated as intensely as this, any virtue departs from him—whether he is, for the moment, by so much the less himself.

A LONG-FELT WANT

HE was sitting next to me at Lord's, and I admired him for never pointing to Rhodes and saying, 'There 's Hobbs,' as most of the other persons round me were doing. Nor did he attempt any conversation until the tea interval, when, after expressing his grief that a good game should be thus frivolously interrupted, he turned to diverse topics.

After a while he told me what he was.

'I am an inventor,' he said.

'And a very interesting profession,' I replied.

'None more so,' he said, 'even when one is just an ordinary inventor; but when one is sociologically imaginative—ah!'

'How does one invent?' I asked him. 'That 's what always bothers me. Do you sit down under a clear sky and produce your patents, or——?'

'That 's what the ordinary inventor does,' he said. 'There 's no knowing when the idea may come to him.

At breakfast, in the train, in the middle of the night, even while talking to somebody. But the sociologically imaginative inventor has to prepare the way. He has first to ask himself what is wanted, and then to get to work to supply that want. The cinema came that way, for example. The inventor of my type got up one morning with a blank mind and said to himself, " What human nature now needs is that thousands of picture palaces should spring up all over the world, in which animated photographic representations of sentiment and melodrama may beguile the tedium of life " ; and straightway he invented the cinema. That is the best kind of inventing. But, to give you an example of the other kind, asbestos grates were an accident pure and simple. An inventor chanced to walk through some catacombs and noticed a great heap of skulls, and this instantly gave him the idea of asbestos fuel. You thus see the difference between the two laws of invention ? The accidental inventors may be useful enough, but very little credit is due to them, whereas the sociologically imaginative inventors are conscious benefactors, and should have pensions and statues.'

' And what are you at work on just now ? ' I asked him.

' Just now,' he replied, ' and in fact for months past, my mind is occupied with a problem, the solution of which will come as a trumpet call all over England, and perhaps even more over Scotland. Many are the householders who will rise and bless me.'

' Well ? ' I said.

' Well,' he continued, ' you have, I suppose, often stayed in country houses where, the people still having some remnants of old-fashionedness left, the billiard-room is locked on Sundays ? '

' I have,' I replied.

'And you have noticed,' he went on, 'that your host or hostess has always apologized for this state of things in much the same words. "It is not they who object, of course; you will acquit them of being so small-minded as that; but one must consider the servants." You have heard that?'

'Often,' I replied.

'As to how it would affect the servants,' he proceeded, 'we need not pause to consider. That is a side issue. The point is that it might. But suppose the servants did not know; suppose that some one could invent a means by which billiards could be played on Sunday in secret, then no one would mind and many dull hours could be turned to cheerfulness. Do you see?'

'Certainly I do,' I said. 'But how?'

'There,' said he, 'is where I come in—the sociologically imaginative inventor. What is wanted is a silencer for billiard balls. It is that deadly click, click that gives the show away and cuts into the very heart of the day of rest. Now if the ivory—or even bonzoline—could be muted, all would be well. The mere fact that voices are heard proceeding from the billiard-room is nothing; you may sit and talk in any room on Sunday without doing the servants moral harm; it is the click, click that is fatal. My life-work, then, is to invent a means by which the balls shall touch in a silence as of the tomb. And,' he added, 'I shall do it. The word failure is not in my dictionary.'

Intrepid fellow, I pray that he may.

THE NEW NAME

PART I

THE scene was Maida Vale—in the home of Julius Blumenbach, an Englishman of one generation.

'Well, my dear,' said Mr. Blumenbach on his return from his office, 'it won't do. The time has come to take the plunge. We have often talked about it, but now we must act. Only this morning I received five letters closing the account—all because of the name.'

'You know I have urged it on you often enough,' said Mrs. Blumenbach. 'And not only I have thought it necessary, but my relatives have urged it too.'

Mr. Blumenbach repressed a gesture of impatience. 'I know, I know,' he said. 'Well, we must do it. *The Times* has a dozen notices of changed names every day.'

'The question is what shall the new one be?' his wife replied. 'We must remember it 's not only for ourselves and the business, but it will be so much better for the boys, too, when they go to Eton. A good name—but what?'

'That 's it,' said Mr. Blumenbach. 'That 's the difficulty. Now I 've got a little list here. I have been jotting down names that took my fancy for some time past. Of course there are many people who merely translate their German names, but I think we ought to go further than that. We ought to be thorough while we are about it.'

'Yes, and let us be very careful,' said Mrs. Blumenbach. 'It 's a great responsibility—a critical moment. It 's almost as critical as—for a woman—marriage. Let us take a really nice name.'

'Of course,' said her husband. 'That goes without saying.'

'Yes,' she continued, 'but a name that goes well with "Sir" or "Lady." You never know, you know.'

'I don't see, myself, that "Sir Julius Blumenbach would sound so bad,' said her husband; 'I've heard worse.'

'But "Sir Julius Kitchener," for example, would sound better,' said Mrs. Blumenbach.

Mr. Blumenbach started. 'You really don't suggest ——' he began.

'No, I don't,' she replied. 'But I want you to see that while we're about it we may as well be thorough. If at the present moment we have a name which is disliked here, how much wiser, when taking another, to choose one which is popular!'

'True,' Mr. Blumenbach said. 'But "Kitchener." Isn't that——'

'Too far? Perhaps so,' said his wife. 'Then what about "French"?'

'A little too short,' said her husband. 'I favour three syllables,' such as "Macdonald."'

'Scotch?'

'Yes, why not?'

'I hadn't been thinking that way,' said Mrs. Blumenbach, 'but I agree—why not "Sir Julius Macdonald?" Yes, that's all right.'

'Or "Mackenzie"?' said Mr. Blumenbach, consulting his list.

'I prefer "Macdonald."'

'Or "Macintosh"?'

'No, no.'

'Or "Abercrombie"?'

'Too long.'

'"Lauder"?'

'No, I think not.'

'He 's very popular.'

'I know; but the music-hall? No,' said Mrs. Blumenbach, taking up a pen, 'let it be "Macdonald."' She traced the name. 'Good heavens!' she exclaimed suddenly, dropping the pen and pushing away the paper with a gesture of finality, 'of course it can't be that.'

'Why ever not?' Mr. Blumenbach insisted.

'Fancy you not knowing!' Mrs. Blumenbach replied. 'You of all people! Why, think of the linen and the silver—all the monograms. Everything would have to be marked afresh. It must begin with B, of course.'

'Of course,' said Mr. Blumenbach, mopping his brow as the terrible truth broke on him, 'of course! What an idiot I have been! Of course it must begin with B. The expense!'

'But fancy you not thinking of that!' Mrs Blumenbach insisted.

'Yes, fancy. It 's worry over the war. I 'm not myself.'

'Poor dear! You can't be,' said his wife. 'Well, what shall we do now?'

'It 's all right,' said Mr. Blumenbach. 'I 'll go to the British Museum to look out the B's in the Edinburgh *Directory*.'

'Do, dear, do!' said his wife, and he hurried for his hat. 'Just to think of you not thinking of that!' she repeated, as he bade her farewell.

'Yes, indeed!' he replied. 'But it 's the war, I 'm sure. I 'm sure it 's the war.'

Later in the day he returned, a potential Sir Julius Bannockburn.

Part II

Mr. Julius Bannockburn hung up his hat with a bang and stepped angrily into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Bannockburn was comfortably seated in an arm-chair, with the tea-table at her side and a fire blazing.

'That 's right,' she said placidly, ignoring her husband's very obvious mental disarray,—' just in time for a cup of tea.'

' No tea for me,' he said darkly.

' Oh yes. It 'll do you good,' she replied, and poured some out.

' By the way, how much do you give for this tea ? Mr. Bannockburn sharply inquired.

' Two-and-eight,' she replied.

He grunted. ' I get excellent tea in the City which retails at two shillings a pound,' he said. ' Better than this.'

' Well, dear,' said Mrs. Bannockburn, ' you don't often have this. This is my tea. You prefer Indian.'

' And why so many different kinds of cake ? ' Mr. Bannockburn went on.

' You won't grudge me those ? ' she answered. ' Surely, even with the war, little things like that might go on ? '

Mr. Bannockburn sent his eyes round the room on a tour of critical exploration.

' Yes,' he continued, ' and how can you do with a fire —at any rate such a fire—on a day like this ? The room is like an oven.' He scowled murderously at the innocent flames and opened the window.

' I felt distinctly chilly,' said Mrs. Bannockburn. ' Besides, a fire is so much more cheerful.'

' Cheerful ! ' said Mr. Bannockburn with a snarl. ' I 'm glad something is cheerful.'

'My dear,' said his wife soothingly, 'you 're overworried. You 've had a hard day at the office. But I 've got something to show you that will make you happy again.' She smiled gaily.

'Happy!' Mr. Bannockburn echoed with abysmal bitterness. 'Happy!' He groaned.

'Yes, happy,' said his wife. 'Now drink your tea,' she added, 'and then light a cigar and tell me all about it.'

'Cigars!' said Mr. Bannockburn; 'I 've done with cigars. At any rate with Havanas. We 're on the brink of ruin, I tell you.'

'Not any longer,' said his wife with a little confident laugh. 'That 's all right now. Taking the new name was to settle that, you know.'

Mr. Bannockburn was attempting to eat a cake, but at these words he gave it up. He struck a match angrily and lit a cigar—a Havana. 'Well, what is it you want to show me?' he asked.

'The cards,' she said. 'They look splendid. Here,' and she handed a visiting-card across the table and drew his attention to the delicate copperplate in which their new name had been inscribed: 'Mrs. Julius Bannockburn.'

Mr. Bannockburn scowled afresh. 'How many of these have you ordered?' he asked anxiously.

'Five hundred for each of us,' she replied. 'And they 're done. They all came this morning.'

Mr. Bannockburn groaned again. 'What ridiculous haste!' he said. 'Where was all the hurry?'

Mrs. Bannockburn laughed. 'Well, I must say!' she exclaimed. 'You to complain of things being done quickly! I 've done all you told me,' she continued. 'Everything. I sent a notice to the Post Office about the telephone directory, telling them to alter the name.

I sent to Kelly's about the London Directory. I told all the tradespeople. I got the cards. I even went further and ordered a few silver labels for your walking-sticks and umbrellas. I thought you would like that.'

Mr. Bannockburn puffed at his cigar and said nothing.

'Aren't I a good head clerk?' she went on. 'But after all, when one does change one's name it is wise to go right through with it, isn't it?'

'Yes,' said her husband ominously, 'when one does change one's name.'

'What do you mean?' Mrs. Bannockburn asked sharply. 'Has anything gone wrong?'

'Everything,' he said. 'I've had a notice forbidding changes of name altogether. Every one has had it.'

'When did you get it?' his wife inquired with a flutter.

'To-day.'

'Then it's all right,' she said excitedly. 'We made the change several days ago.'

'Yes,' replied her husband, 'but the notice goes on to say that every one who has changed since the war began must revert to the name he had before the war commenced. You can't get away from that.'

'But we paid for it,' Mrs. Bannockburn exclaimed. 'We paid for it. Why did they take our money?'

'They didn't know then,' said her lord. 'It's only just decided by this infernal Government.'

Mrs. Bannockburn turned red. 'This is terrible,' she said. 'And how unfair! How grossly unfair! It's not as if we were Germans. I'm not a German at all, and you are merely a German's son, and British to the core. Of course they'll give the money back?'

'It says nothing about that,' replied the Briton.

'How very unlike England!' she said.

'Yes,' he agreed; 'but the point is, apart from the

horrible expense of it all, that here we are, saddled with a name which is bound to keep customers away and which we thought we had got rid of for ever. It 's horrible. It 's wrong. It 's a shame.' He paced the room furiously.

Mrs. Bannockburn—or, as we now should say, Mrs. Blumenbach—looked in the fire for a few moments in silence. ' Well,' she said at last, ' we must make the best of it, I suppose ; we 're not paupers anyway, and things are never so bad as one fears. After all, we haven't been to so very much expense. A few cards and so forth. You, dear, can hardly have spent a penny over it.'

' Eh,' said Mr. Blumenbach sharply—' what ? '

' I said that the cost to which we have gone since we changed our name is very trifling,' his wife repeated. ' You yourself have been put to no expense at all, except perhaps office paper.'

Mr. Blumenbach looked suspiciously at her and resumed his walk. ' No, no,' he said ; ' that 's fortunate, certainly.'

At this moment a servant entered bringing the post, which included a long roll of paper addressed to ' Mrs. Julius Bannockburn.'

' I wonder what this can be,' she remarked as she reached for a paper-knife.

Her husband snatched it and held it behind him. ' Oh, I know all about that,' he said ; ' it 's a mistake. It 's meant for me, not you.'

' But it 's addressed to me,' said his wife. ' Please let me have it.'

Mr. Blumenbach for a moment flashed lightning. ' Oh, all right,' he said, ' take it. I might as well confess to my folly, and, after all, I did it as a pleasant surprise for you, even though it 's a failure. But I heard about

some heraldic fellow, and I got him to draw me up a Bannockburn pedigree. A Scotch one, you know. I was going to have it framed in the hall. Burn the thing without looking at it.'

'Was it—was it—very expensive?' his wife asked tremblingly.

'Fifty pounds,' he said, half in pride at his own recklessness and half as though having a tooth out.

'Fifty pounds!' Mrs. Blumenbach moaned, and burst into tears.

TWO LETTERS

SOMETIMES it happens that illiteracy can get there as quickly and surely as the highest culture, though by a different route, as in the following instance.

Once upon a time there was a Little Tailor in a little shop in Soho. Not a tailor in the ordinary sense of the word, but a ladies' tailor. He was never seen out of shirt sleeves, which might have been whiter, and he came from one of the foreign lands where the youths seem to be under conscription for this trade. What land it was I cannot say for certain, but I should guess one of the Polands—German probably, but called Russian by him.

Once upon a time—in fact, at the same time—there was also a lady connected with the stage, and as her theatre was contiguous to the Little Tailor's place of business, it was only natural that when one of her gowns was suddenly torn her dresser should hasten to him to have it put right. But the charge was so disproportionate to the slight work done that the dresser deferred payment, and deferred it so long that the Little Tailor

had to lay down the shears and take the pen in their place. And this is what he wrote :

'DEAR MISS,—I don't feel like exactly to quarrel with somebody. But it is the first time in my life happens to me a thing like that. And therefore I am not going to let it go. I was just keeping quiet to see what you would do. But what I can see you think I have forgotten about it. But I may tell you this much. It is not the few shillings but it is the impudence to come in while I am away to ask the girl to do it as a special, and then to come in and take it away, and then tell the girl you would come in to-morrow to see me. And this is six weeks already and you have not come yet. The only thing I can say now, Miss, if you will kindly send the money by return, because I tell you candidly I will not be had by you in this manner. Should you not send the money I shall try to get to know you personally, and will have something to say about it.'

If the art of letter-writing is to state clearly one's own position, that is as good a letter as any written. Every word expresses not only the intention of the writer but his state of mind. No one could improve upon it except in essentials.

My second example of the epistolary art is from the farther East—in fact, India. It is a specimen of Baboo skill ; and, as very often happens, the writer is an official connected with a railway. The classic example of Baboo railway correspondence is the frantic telegram about the tiger that was consuming the staff. In the following document we find similar trouble, but the tiger is now a man. An ironical touch is added to the affair by the circumstance that the unfortunate officer in charge who

tells the tale had taken command of the assaulted station only that morning. But here is the letter :

'16*th February* 1915.

Further to my code CP of date I hasten to inform you that this noon about 2.30 P.M. I noticed a quarrel just behind this office window. I paid little or no attention to this, but a little later on I heard a great alarm raised from the station platform ; rushing out I saw to my great surprise a heap of men in one mass, few bleeding ; sticks and fists were freely used. With the help of few passengers I approached the mob, not without fearful beating in my heart, and attempted to separate them in vain, and at the way one burly-looking villain stared at me I left the place, leaving them to their own fate, and got inside the office. I tried every one of the staff to send for the Headman, but none would dare for fear of being assaulted by one who I understand is the bully of the place. Shortly this particular individual rushed inside carrying the door-bar, which he broke off, and used criminal force on me and the booking clerk. He threatened both of us of bodily harm, swearing that he will bring down the whole station apparently for no reason.

' It was far more than what a man alive could have put up with, and but for the timidity of the staff I would have bundled them together. I thought of my firearm more than once. Thanks to Providence, I controlled, although I am unable to say how. He pulled me about twice, and it was my sickness that prevented me from running him down to earth. In the meantime I wired to all concerned. He has also damaged some flower plants, etc. No. 17 Down was due, and when she was approaching the mob dispersed and this burly villain rushed inside again and forced a

ticket from the B.C., who very wisely issued it lest he would assault and upset all, for the man appeared very desperate and fearful and did not pay the fare of the ticket. The police arrived and are taking necessary steps. I would like to point out that the life of the station staff here is in danger every minute.

'I took charge of the station only to-day.

'(Signed) ——

O. in C.'

The curious thing about this letter is its frank admission of fear. Usually the writer testifies to his own courage and reflects on the pusillanimity of his staff; but here the Officer in Charge, although he admits that the staff was timid too, does not disguise his own reluctances.

But what a first day!

THE SUFFERER

HAVING engaged a sleeping-berth I naturally hurried, coin in hand, to the conductor, as all wise travellers do (usually to their discomfiture), to see if I could be accommodated with a compartment to myself and be guaranteed against invasion.

The other berths were all taken.

I then sought my compartment, to learn the worst as to my position, whether above or below the necessarily offensive person who was to be my companion.

He was already there, and we exchanged the hard implacable glare that is reserved among the English for the other fellow in a wagon-lit compartment.

When I discovered that to him had fallen the dreaded

upper berth I relaxed a little, and later we were full of courtesies to each other—renunciations of hatpegs, racks, and so forth, and charming mutual concessions as to the light, which I controlled from below—so that by morning we were so friendly that he deemed me a fit recipient of his Great Paris Grievance.

This grievance, which he considered that every one should know about, bore upon the prevalence at that time, before the War, of spurious coins in the so-called Gay City and the tendency of Parisians to work them off on foreigners. As he said, a more inhospitable course one cannot conceive. Foreigners in Paris should be treated as guests, and the English especially so. But no. It was the English who were the first victims of the possessor of obsolete francs, two-franc and five-franc pieces guiltless of their country's silver, and ten-franc pieces into whose composition no gold has entered.

He had been in Paris but an hour or so when—but let me tell the story as my travelling companion told it to me.

'I don't know what your experience in Paris has been,' he said, 'but I have been victimized right and left.'

He was now getting up, while I lay at comparative ease in my berth and watched his difficulties in the congested room and thought what horrid vests he wore.

'I had been in Paris but a few hours,' he continued, 'when it was necessary to pay a cabman. I handed him a franc. He examined it, laughed and returned it. I handed him another. He went through the same performance. Having found some good money to get rid of him, I sat down outside a café to try and remember where I had received the change in which these useless coins had been inserted. During a week in Paris much of my time was spent in that way.'

He sighed and drew on his trousers. His braces were red.

'I showed the bad francs to a waiter,' he went on, 'and he, like the cabman, laughed. In fact, next to an undressed woman, there is no stroke of wit so certain of Parisian mirth as a bad coin. The first thought of every one to whom I showed my collection was to be amused.' His face blackened with rage. 'This cheerful callousness in a matter involving a total want of principle and straight-dealing as between man and man,' he said, 'denotes to what a point of cynicism the Parisians have attained.'

I agreed with him.

'The waiter,' he continued, 'went through my money and pointed out what was good and what either bad or out of currency. He called other waiters to enjoy the joke. It seemed that in about four hours I had acquired three bad francs, one bad two-franc piece and two bad five-franc pieces. I put them away in another pocket and got fresh change from him, which, as I subsequently discovered, contained one obsolete five-franc piece and two discredited francs. And so it went on. I was a continual target for them.'

Here he began to wash, and the story was interrupted.

When he re-emerged I asked him why he didn't always examine his change.

'It 's very difficult to remember to do so,' he said, 'and, besides, I am not an expert. Anyway, it got worse and worse, and when a bad gold piece came along I realized that I must do something; so I wrote to the Chief of the Police.'

'In French?' I asked.

'No, in English—the language of honesty. I told him my own experiences. I said that other English people whom I had met had testified to similar trouble; and I put it to him that as a matter of civic pride—*esprit de pays*—he should do his utmost to cleanse Paris of this

evil. I added that in my opinion the waiters were the worst offenders.'

'Have you had a reply?' I asked.

'Not yet,' he said, and having completed his toilet he made room for me.

I thought about him a good deal and sympathized not a little, for he seemed a good sort of fellow and might possibly have had his calculations as to expenditure considerably upset by his adventures. It certainly was a shame!

Later, meeting him in the restaurant-car, I asked him to show me his store of bad money. I wanted to see for myself what these coins were like.

'I haven't got them,' he said.

'You sent them to the Chief of the Police with your letter, I suppose?' I said.

'No, I didn't,' he replied. 'The fact is—well—as a matter of fact I managed to work them all off again.'

THREE VENETIAN ISLANDS[1]

THE cheap way to Murano is by the little penny steamer from the Fondamenta Nuova. This side of Venice is poor and squalid, but there is more fun here than anywhere else, for on Sundays the boys borrow any kind of craft that can be obtained and hold merry little regattas, which even those sardonic officials, the captains of the steamboats, respect: stopping or easing down so as to interfere with no event. But one should go to Murano by gondola, and go in the afternoon.

Starting anywhere near the Molo, this means that the route will be by the Rio del Palazzo, under the Ponte di

[1] From *A Wanderer in Venice*.

Paglia and the Bridge of Sighs, between the Doges' Palace and the prison ; up the winding Rio di S. Maria Formosa, and then into the Rio dei Mendicanti with a glimpse of the superb Colleoni statue and SS. Giovanni e Paolo and the lions on the Scuola of S. Mark ; under the bridge with a pretty Madonna on it ; and so up the Rio dei Mendicanti, passing on the left a wineyard with two graceful round arches in it and then a pleasant garden with a pergola, and then a busy squero with men always at work on gondolas new or old. And so beneath a high bridge to the open lagoon, with the gay walls and sombre cypresses of the cemetery immediately in front and the island of Murano beyond.

Many persons stop at the Campo Santo, but there is not much profit in so doing unless one is a Blair or an Ashton. Its cypresses are more beautiful from the water than close at hand, and the Venetian tombstones dazzle. Moreover, there are no seats, and the custodian insists upon abstracting one's walking-stick. I made fruitless efforts to be directed to the English section, where among many graves of our countrymen is that of the historical novelist, G. P. R. James.

Murano is interesting in art as being the home of that early school of painting in which the Vivarini were the greatest names, which supplied altar-pieces for all the Venetian churches until the Bellini arrived from Padua with more acceptable methods. The invaders brought in an element of worldly splendour hitherto lacking. From the concentrated saintliness of the Vivarini to the sumptuous assurance of Titian is a far cry, yet how few the years that intervened ! To-day there are no painters in Murano ; nothing indeed but gardeners and glass-blowers, and the island is associated purely with the glass industry. Which is the most interesting furnace, I know not, for I have always fallen to the first of all,

close to the landing-stage, and spent there several amusing half-hours, albeit hotter than the innermost pit. Nothing ever changes there: one sees the same artificers and the same routine; the same flames rage; glass is the same mystery, beyond all conjuring, so ductile and malleable here, so brittle and rigid everywhere else. There you sit, or stand, some score of visitors, while the wizards round the furnace busily and incredibly convert molten blobs of anything (you would have said) but glass into delicate carafes and sparkling vases. Meanwhile the sweat streams from them in rivulets, a small Aquarius ever and anon fetches tumblers of water from a tap outside or glasses of red wine, and a soft voice at your ear, in whatever language happens to be yours, supplies a commentary on the proceedings. Beware of listening to it with too much interest, for it is this voice which, when the glass-blowing flags, is proposing to sell you something. The 'entrance' may be 'free,' but the exit rarely is so.

Let me describe a particular feat. After a few minutes, in sauntered a little lean detached man with a pointed beard and a long cigar, who casually took from a workman in the foreground a hollow iron rod, at the end of which was a more than commonly large lump of the glowing mass. This he whirled a little, by a rotatory movement of the rod between the palms of his hands, and then again dipped it into the heart of the flames, fetching it out more fiery than ever and much augmented. This too he whirled, blowing down the pipe first (but without taking his cigar from his mouth) again and again, until the solid lump was a great glistening globe. The artist—for if ever there was an artist it is he—carried on this exhausting task with perfect nonchalance, talking and joking with the others the while, but never relaxing the concentration of his hands, until there came a

moment when the globe was broken from the original rod and fixed in some magical way to another. Again it went into the furnace, now merely for heat and not for any accretion of glass, and coming out, behold it was a bowl; and so, with repeated visits to the flames, on each return wider and shallower, it eventually was finished as an exact replica of the beautiful greeny-blue flower-dish on a neighbouring table. The artist, still smoking, then sauntered out again for fresh air, and was seen no more for a while.

But one should not be satisfied with the sight of the fashioning of a bowl or goblet, however interesting the process may be; but entering the gondola again should insist upon visiting both S. Pietro Martire and S. Donato, even if the gondolier, as is most probable, will affirm that both are closed.

The first named is on the left of the canal by which we enter Murano, and which for a while is bordered by glass factories as close together as doctors in Harley Street. The church architecturally is nothing; its value is in its pictures, especially a Bellini and a Basaiti, and its sacristan.

This sacristan has that simple keenness which is a rarity in Venice. He rejoices in his church and in your pleasure in it. He displays first the Bellini—a Madonna with the strong protective Bellini hands about the child, above them bodiless cherubim flying, and on the right a delectable city with square towers. The Basaiti is chiefly notable for what, were it cleaned, would be a lovely landscape. Before both the sacristan is ecstatic, but on his native heath, in the sacristy itself, he is even more contented. It is an odd room, with carvings all around it, in which sacred and profane subjects are most curiously mingled: here John the Baptist in the chief scenes of his life, even to imprisonment in a wooden cage,

into which the sacristan slips a delighted expository hand; and there Nero, Prometheus, Bacchus, and Seneca without a nose.

Re-entering the gondola, escorted to it by hordes of young Muranese, we move on to the Grand Canal of the island, a noble expanse of water. After turning first to the right and then to the left, and resisting an invitation to enter the glass museum, we disembark, beside a beautiful bridge, at the cathedral, which rises serenely from the soil of its spacious campo.

S. Donato's exterior is almost more foreign-looking than S. Mark's, although S. Mark's is, when you enter it, the more exotic. The outside wall of S. Donato's apse, which is the first thing that the traveller sees, is its most beautiful architectural possession and utterly different from anything in Venice: an upper and a lower series of lovely, lonely arches, empty and meaningless in this Saharan campo, the fire of enthusiasm which flamed in their original builders having died away, and this corner of the island being almost depopulated, for Murano gathers now about its glass-works on the other side of its Grand Canal. Hence the impression of desertion is even more complete than at Torcello, where one almost necessarily visits the cathedral in companies twenty to fifty strong.

At the door, to which we are guided by a boy or so who know that cigarettes are thrown away at sacred portals, is the sacristan, an aged gentleman in a velvet cap who has a fuller and truer pride in his fane than any of his brothers in Venice yonder. With reason too, for this basilica is so old as to make many Venetian churches mere mushrooms, and even S. Mark's itself an imitation in the matter of inlaid pavement. Speaking slowly, with the perfection of enunciation, and burgeoning with satisfaction, the old fellow moves about the floor as he

has done so many thousand times, pointing out this beauty and that, above and below, without the faintest trace of mechanism. In course of time, when he is fully persuaded that we are not only English but worthy of his secret, it comes out that he had the priceless privilege of knowing Signor ' Rooskin ' in the flesh, and from his pocket he draws a copy of *The Stones of Venice*, once the property of one Constance Boyle, but now his own. This he fondles, for though the only words in his own chapters that he can understand are ' Murano ' and ' Donato,' yet did not his friend the great Signor Rooskin write it, and what is more, spend many, many days in careful examination of everything here before he wrote it ? For that is what most appeals to the old gentleman : the recognition of his church as being worthy of such a study.

The floor is very beautiful, and there is a faded series of saints by one of the Vivarini of Murano, behind the altar, on which the eye rests very comfortably—chiefly perhaps on the panels which are only painted curtains ; but the most memorable feature of the cathedral is the ancient Byzantine mosaic of the Madonna—a Greek Madonna—in the hollow of the apse : a long slender figure in blue against a gold background, who holds her hands rather in protest than welcome, and is fascinating rather for the piety which set her there with such care and thought to her glory than for her beauty. Signor Rooskin, it is true, saw her as a symbol of sadness, and some of the most exquisite sentences of *The Stones of Venice* belong to her ; but had her robe been of less lovely hues it is possible that he might have written differently.

When the church was built, probably in the tenth century, the Virgin was its patron saint. S. Donato's body being brought hither by Doge Domenico Michiel (1118-1130), the church was known as Santa Maria, or

San Donato ; and to-day it is called S. Donato. And when the time comes for the old sacristan to die, I hope (no matter what kind of a muddle his life has been) that S. Donato will be at hand, near the gate, to pull him through, for sheer faithfulness to his church.

The gondola returns by the same route, and as we pass the Campo Santo the rays of the afternoon sun seem so to saturate its ruddy walls that they give out light of their own. It is in order to pass slowly beneath these walls and cypresses that I recommend the gondola as the medium for a visit to Murano. But the penny steamers go to a pier close to S. Donato and are frequent.

Murano is within every visitor's range, no matter how brief his stay, but Burano is another matter. The steamer which sails from the pier opposite Danieli's on all fine afternoons, except Sundays and holidays, requires four hours ; but if the day be fine they are four hours not to be forgotten. The way out is round the green island of S. Elena, skirting the Arsenal, the vastness of which is apparent from the water, and under the north wall of Murano, where its pleasant gardens spread, once so gay with the Venetian aristocracy but now the property of market gardeners and lizards. Then through the channels among the shallows, north, towards the two tall minarets in the distance, the one of Burano, the other of Torcello. Far away may be seen the Tyrolean Alps, with, if it is spring, their snow-clad peaks poised in the air ; nearer, between us and the islands, is a military or naval station, and here and there are yellow and red sails which we are to catch and pass. Venice has nothing more beautiful than her coloured sails, both upon the water and reflected in it.

The entrance to Burano is by a long winding canal, which at the Campo Santo, with its battered campanile and sentinel cypress at the corner, branches to left and

right—left to Torcello and right to Burano. Here the steamer is surrounded by boatmen calling seductively in their soft rich voices 'Goon-dola! Goon-dola!' their aim being to take the visitor either to the cypress-covered island of S. Francesco in Deserto, where S. Francis is believed to have taken refuge, or to Torcello, to allow of a longer stay there than this steamer permits; and unless one is enamoured of such foul canals and importunate children as Burano possesses, it is well to listen to this lure. But Burano has charms, notwithstanding its dirt. Its squalid houses are painted every hue that the prism knows, and through the open doors are such arrays of copper and brass utensils as one associates with Holland. Every husband is a fisherman; every wife a mother and a lace-maker, as the doorways bear testimony, for both the pillow and the baby in arms are punctually there for the procession of visitors to witness. Whether they would be there did not the word go round that the steamer approached, I cannot say, but here and there the display seems a thought theatrical. Meanwhile, in their boats in the canals, or on the pavement mending nets, are the Burano men.

Everybody is dirty. If Venice is the bride of the Adriatic, Burano is the kitchen slut.

Yet there is an oasis of smiling cleanliness, and that is the chief sight of the place—the Scuola Merletti, under the patronage of Queen Margherita, the centre of the lace-making industry. This building, which is by the church, is, outside, merely one more decayed habitation. You step within, past the little glass box of the custodian, whose small daughter is steering four inactive snails over the open page of a ledger, ascend a flight of stairs, and behold you are in the midst of what seem to be thousands of girls in rows, each nursing her baby. On closer inspection the babies are revealed to be pillows

held much as babies are held, and every hand is busy with a bobbin (or whatever it is), and every mouth seems to be munching. Passing on, you enter another room—if the first has not abashed you—and here are thousands more. Pretty girls too, some of them, with their black massed hair and olive skins, and all so neat and happy. Specimens of their work, some of it of miraculous delicacy, may be bought and kept as a souvenir of a most delightful experience.

For the rest, the interest of Burano is in Burano itself, in the aggregate; for the church is a poor gaudy thing and there is no architecture of mark. And so, fighting one's way through small boys who turn indifferent somersaults, and little girls whose accomplishment is to rattle clogged feet and who equally were born with an extended hand, you rejoin the steamer.

Torcello is of a different quality. Burano is intensely and rather shockingly living; Torcello is nobly dead. It is in fact nothing but market gardens, a few houses where Venetian sportsmen stay when they shoot duck and are royally fed by kitcheners whose brass and copper make the mouth water, and a great forlorn solitary cathedral.

History tells us that in the sixth century, a hundred and more years after the flight of the mainlanders to Rialto and Malamocco, another exodus occurred, under fear of Alboin and the invading Lombards, this time to Torcello. The way was led by the clergy, and quickly a church was built to hearten the emigrants. Of this church there remain the deserted buildings before us, springing from the weeds, but on a scale which makes simple the realization of the populousness of the ancient colony.

The charming octagonal little building on the right with its encircling arcade is the church of S. Fosca, now

undergoing very thorough repair: in fact, everything that a church can ask is being restored to it, save religion. No sea cave could be less human than these deserted temples, given over now to sightseers and to custodians who demand admittance money. The pit railed in on the left before the cathedral's west wall is the ancient baptistery, where complete immersion was practised. The cathedral within is remarkable chiefly for its marble throne high up in the apse, where the bishop sat with his clergy about him on semicircular seats gained by steps. Above them are mosaics, the Virgin again, as at S. Donato, in the place of honour, but here she is given her Son and instantly becomes more tender. The twelve apostles attend. On the opposite wall is a quaint mosaic of the Last Judgment with the usual sharp division of parties. The floor is very beautiful in places, and I have a recollection of an ancient and attractive carved marble pulpit.

The vigorous climb the campanile, from which, as Signor Rooskin says, may be seen Torcello and Venice —'Mother and Daughter . . . in their widowhood.' Looking down, it is strange indeed to think that here once were populous streets.

On the way to the campanile do not forget to notice the great stone shutters of the windows of the cathedral; which suggest a security impossible to be conveyed by iron. No easy task setting these in their place and hinging them. What purpose the stone arm-chair in the grass between the baptistery and S. Fosca served is not known. One guide will have it the throne of Attila; another, a seat of justice. Be that as it may, tired ladies can find it very consoling in this our twentieth century.

For antiquaries there is a museum of excavated relics of Torcello; but with time so short it is better to wander

a little, seeking for those wild flowers which in England are objects of solicitude to gardeners, or watching butterflies that are seen in our country only when pinned on cork.

The return voyage leaves S. Francesco in Deserto on the right, with the long low Lido straight ahead. Then we turn to the right and the Lido is on the left for most of the way to Venice. After a mile or so the mouth of the Adriatic is passed, where the Doge dropped his ring from the Bucintoro and thus renewed the espousals. On the day which I have in mind two airships were circling the city, and now and then the rays of the sun caught their envelopes and turned them to silver. Beneath, the lagoon was still as a pond; a few fishing boats with yellow sails lay at anchor near the Porto di Lido, like brimstone butterflies on a hot stone; and far away the snow of the Tyrolean Alps still hung between heaven and earth.

THE PRINCESS AND MEN [1]

I WAS in Oxford Street, drifting slowly towards an appointment, when the dismal words 'Fun City,' in large letters, caught the eye over some derelict premises. Oxford Street is ordinarily so consistently businesslike and in earnest that I thought I might as well examine this frivolous stock-in-trade as any other, even though long experience has taught me how little the promise contains; and in I went. You know what 'Fun Cities' are: penny-in-the-slot machines, living photographs, fortune-tellers, football matches, try-your-strengths, and gramophones; ninepins, ring-throwing, cocoanuts, sweet stalls; with a few more elaborate side-

[1] From *Loiterer's Harvest*.

shows, all at a penny, those in this particular one comprising a forlorn negro champion disarrayed for boxing a lean and dispirited white champion; a company of dwarfs; a palmist; and a troupe of wrestlers. All were to perform for a penny behind their grimy curtains, and iron throats were shouting the glad news.

I was coming out in a state of dismay induced by so much noise and negligibleness when another metal larynx urged upon me the duty of seeing 'the most beautiful girl on earth,' who was not only that rare thing, but also 'a picture gallery in herself'—the Princess Cristina, in short—and, looking up, I saw a poster of a tattooed lady, fortified by photographs which brought in the evidence of the truthful camera and suggested that, for once, the poster artist had not gone much further than fact. This was an interesting discovery; but there was something in these pictures of the tattooed lady's face, apart (I swear) from her eventful epidermis, which made its appeal—a touch of wistfulness and not a little grace—and, the entrance fee being within my means, I paid it, and found myself among a dozen men, who had, of course, been urged thither by precisely similar motives.

The Princess herself was on the platform, shivering under an overcoat, waiting to begin, which she could not do until the metal larynx was mercifully mute. She stood motionless, looking at nothing, and the camera had not lied. Or, if it had, it was on the other side, for she was more attractive than it stated. Her features were delicate and regular; her mouth noticeably well cut, although her lips were perhaps a shade too thin; her eyes were at once candid and melancholy. The larynx stopping, she got to work instantly; stripped off her overcoat, revealing bare chest and arms, very shapely; and, in a Cockney accent with a transatlantic hint, began her speech of introduction.

Her shoulders, arms, and what could be seen of her bosom were wholly covered with those blue-and-red designs that appeal to tattooers and tattooed and to no one else; dragons, ships, intertwined flags, true love knots, daggers, snakes, Buffalo Bill's head. These, one by one, she pointed to and explained with a mirthless humour and that want both of real shame and false shame which can so astonish and abash the onlooker, calling us impartially 'boys' the while, and never looking at any one individually. The glories of the upper regions having been exhibited—'Now, boys,' she said, 'I 'm going to give you a treat,' and proceeded to disclose her legs, which turned out to have practically the same patterns as the rest of her.

But it was not the tattooing that was interesting; it was herself. She was so utterly a machine—so detached and disinterested, and, as I say, mirthless, her wistful, sophisticated eyes never lighting to her tongue, and never caring to investigate a single spectator's face. Years of public exhibition, together with the facetious or familiar comments of certain units of the many knots before her, had done their work, and men to her were men in a special sense of the word. I will not say enemies, but necessary evils: foolish, inquisitive creatures who had got to be kept their distance, and, while entertained, repelled. Watching her, one had the feeling that she was by far the best thing there. Watching her, high on her little platform, above us all, unique in the possession of these trumpery indigo markings (no doubt inflicted upon her early in youth by foresighted parents), the promise of displaying which had brought day after day, year after year, in the New World equally with the Old (for the tattooer obviously had worked with a cosmopolitan eye), these curious little crowds of which I now made one, I realized suddenly what the

prevailing expression on those refined features was. It was contempt. The Princess had summed us up; she knew men through and through; and if there were any exceptions (which was unlikely), was too clever to admit it. For the really clever people never admit exceptions: they generalize and succeed.

Any doubt there might be on this score disappeared later; for she produced a bundle of sealed envelopes, which, from the nature of their contents, might not, she said, be sold to ladies, and must not be opened inside the building; and these she offered at a penny each with a portrait of herself thrown in. We all paid our pennies and filed out, eager, as the pretty, tired, and very chilly Princess knew, to discover as quickly as possible, unobserved by each other, what we had got. . . .

My envelope contained a piece of paper bearing these words: 'Great respect from everybody do persons get that are born on this day; they are open-minded, intelligent, and thoughtful, make good friends and partners, are very loving to the opposite sex.'

ON MONTMARTRE [1]

THE cab took Mr. Bloor and Rudd up the steep sides of Montmartre at a gallop, with a cracking of the whip and clatter of the hoofs that made talking impossible.

Alighting, they entered the gayest room that Rudd had ever been in. A bright warm glow illuminated it; the buzz of conversation and laughter mingling with a merry tune filled the air; and in a space surrounded by the many tables with their white cloths, red lamp shades, and

[1] From *Landmarks*.

jovial guests, half a dozen dazzling girls with gleaming shoulders were dancing. It might be a factory of bitter morrows, this hall of pleasure, but no thought of any of them was present now. All was effervescence and vivacity.

Mr. Bloor seemed to be as well known here as elsewhere. A brisk little *maître d'hôtel* greeted him and led him to a reserved table, where he was greeted as a patron by the waiter. Mr. Bloor ordered Marenne oysters and champagne, and settled himself to observe the gathering and instruct Rudd in its peculiarities.

'Which of the girls shall we ask to have some supper?' Mr. Bloor asked Rudd. 'Any one you like.'

Rudd scrutinized them with a new interest.

'What about that one?' he said.

But Mr. Bloor had an objection to her.

'Then that one?'

Mr. Bloor did not approve of her; nor was he cordial about two more suggestions.

'I think you had better choose,' said Rudd. 'You know more about them than I do.'

This being what Mr. Bloor had intended, he straightway beckoned to a tall, slender, piquante girl in red, with very low shoulders, who at once, as if expecting the invitation, came over, shook hands and sat down, with a little sigh of happy ease, wafting all about her a heavy sweet scent.

Mr. Bloor gave an order to the waiter, and then, pouring out wine for his new guest, drank her health, all three of them touching glasses, and the girl, whose name was Germaine, giving Rudd a curious quizzical smile.

Mr. Bloor settled down to talk to her in his grave measured French, and Rudd meanwhile was left to look about him.

The little orchestra of some seven players in red coats

never stopped for a moment. One tune merged into another without a hitch, and each brought new dancers into the centre. Some were girls belonging to the house; some were visiting girls in their hats; the few men were mostly professional. The girls for the most part danced together and kept their eyes on their reflections in the many mirrors.

At intervals a man sang. Rudd's French, which was of the precise Ollendorffian order, left him instantly the song began and never caught up again; but there was very little doubt that the subject-matter was one or more of the phases through which the great emotion can pass, comic or serious. Germaine laughed at the jokes with as much freshness as though they were new, seeking confederacy in both her companions' faces, but rather more in Rudd's than in Mr. Bloor's.

Rudd thought her radiantly pretty, but regretted her cosmetics. She had put them on not to hide age, for she was only twenty-two at most, but, with the intriguing perversity of her class, to suggest a voluptuous fatigue. This, at very close quarters, they did not achieve, for it was obvious that she was full of life and spirits. All her curves were young, and her natural instincts were for quick movement and gaiety.

Rudd was suddenly conscious that she was pressing his foot under the table, and, in the very midst of a sentence to Mr. Bloor, her eyes and lips flashed a message to him of peculiar friendliness. Flattering though this might be, it put him in a false position with their host, and he was glad when Germaine asked to be excused while she danced the next dance.

'A pretty child,' said Mr. Bloor, and Rudd agreed.

'I 've been urging her to give this up and behave sensibly and get married,' said Mr. Bloor. 'She 'll be old in no time at this rate. I hope she 'll think about it. I might be able to help her.'

To help people was, as Rudd had already discovered, Mr. Bloor's foible. He left behind him wherever he went a long trail of disaster, all proceeding from this purest and most disinterested motive.

Before her return Germaine had sipped a little champagne at two or three other tables where she had admirers; but she now settled down, not forgetting to face the mirror and extract comfort from it, to a very deep conversation with Mr. Bloor, of which Rudd heard but little, but which certainly bore upon some form of innocent future designed for her by her new friend.

'Well,' said Mr. Bloor at last, 'it is half-past two. We must be going.' And Rudd, being in a dependent position, had to agree. But he would cheerfully have sat on till breakfast-time.

Their rising was the signal for a cataclysm of attention and courtesy. Waiters rushed to move the table, hats and coats were brought and handed and held, and the *maître d'hôtel* bent double. Mr. Bloor replied with suitable largesse and smiles.

Germaine came to the door with them and laid a caressing hand first on Mr. Bloor and then on Rudd.

'*A demain*,' said Mr. Bloor, as he gave her a banknote and proceeded downstairs with the assured step of one who had done a good action.

Rudd was following, when he felt a touch on his arm and beheld Germaine on tip-toe behind him.

'Keece,' she said, and set her lips full on his. . . .

He descended the stairs in a whirl. Fancy her liking him so much as that. He had thought it was Mr. Bloor. Odd creatures, women!

Rudd passed a troubled night, in which Germaine's red lips were ever present, and the next morning woke to find that Mr. Bloor was suffering from one of his headaches and did not intend to get up.

Rudd therefore had to spend this, his last, day alone; which he did agreeably enough in various museums and galleries, with echoes of Germaine's voice as a *leit-motif*.

Now and again his heart would give a special thud as some passing woman wafted a perfume similar to hers. And so many women resembled her too. Again and again he saw her, as he thought, advancing towards him or retreating from him, and always his pulse quickened and his lips tingled again. He had never before been kissed like that.

It was the evening that was difficult, for Mr. Bloor was still too unwell to eat.

Rudd began by dining at a Duval, giving, however, to the ordering of his simple meal an attention quite new to him, and he even sent back one plate as unsatisfactory —a plate which a week ago he would have cheerfully accepted.

Dinner over, he roamed up and down the boulevards for an hour or two, his one idea being to get through the time till half-past twelve, when that fascinating night-resort opened and he could again bask in its warm bright friendliness and see the woman who loved him.

Tiring of walking and having no wish for a theatre or hall, he sat down outside a Rue Royale café where there was an orchestra, and watched the other guests and the passers-by. Paris was very interesting, but already, after less than three days of it, he was beginning to feel a spiritual hunger. Among so much that was sparkling and brisk there was little that was cordial. He felt utterly outside these lives and utterly incapable ever of really sharing them. The impression came to him that he was inspecting a prison, and all these people were the prisoners. They could never escape, but he, if he had luck, and to-morrow's train left the Gare du Nord, he might.

At last it was time to start, and Rudd, both for

economy and for something to do, began his climb to the Place Pigalle, where Lutetianism as prepared and spiced for the foreigners best flourishes.

He was a little earlier than the night before and the room was not so full; but nothing could exceed the warmth of his welcome by the *maître d'hôtel* and staff, and he was led to his table as to a throne.

Almost immediately Germaine, for whom he had glanced round in vain, appeared mysteriously from nowhere and joined him, drawing the chair next him so close that he could feel her warmth, and enveloping him with that perfume of which he had been thinking so much.

Germaine, who looked a little less animated than yesterday, asked after the other monsieur. Was he not coming?

Rudd explained that he had a bad *mal de tête.*

Germaine's expression was one of intense sympathy as she pressed a shade nearer to Rudd.

The other monsieur would come to-morrow, would he not? Germaine inquired.

Rudd said that most probably Mr. Bloor would; but not himself. '*Moi,*' he added painfully, '*je reviendrai à Angleterre demain matin.*'

Germaine was distressed to hear this, and snuggled if possible nearer, but she was clearly pleased to ascertain that Mr. Bloor remained in Paris.

'*Il est gentil,*' she said; using the highest compliment which Montmartre knows, and which applies chiefly to rich foreigners. Far-from-good Americans, even while they live, can be called *gentils* in Paris.

The waiter meanwhile was preparing to take the order, and Rudd, observing this, faltered. He had only forty francs left.

He searched the unpopular back blocks of the wine-list for something that was not champagne, and the

waiter's interest in him visibly evaporated as he did so. Germaine and the waiter exchanged glances.

Rudd at last ordered some Chablis—the cheapest—at seven francs, and some cold meat.

Germaine's face took on so wistful an air that Rudd had to ask her if anything was the matter.

She said it was nothing—she was merely *triste*.

'But why?'

Bit by bit it came out that she had a sister who lived with her and was very ill. The doctor's bill had been enormous. Germaine had paid it but it had swallowed up everything, even the generous present of the other monsieur, Rudd's friend, last night. Could Rudd——?

Here was a dilemma. Why had he not realized how expensive these places and these sentimental friendships were?

With real concern and regret and the deepest sympathy for this fascinating creature, Rudd expressed the state of his *bourse*, holding and pressing her hand to enforce his sincerity.

Germaine frowned and said that she understood perfectly, but Rudd noticed a drop in the temperature. Her foot, which had been touching his, was withdrawn.

Suddenly she replaced it. Could he not, she asked, take a cab down to the hotel and borrow from the other monsieur? '*Il est gentil, si gentil*': he would lend Rudd much money so readily.

'Impossible,' said Rudd, touching his head. '*Trop malade.*'

Germaine was more than disappointed, and showed it, and a minute or so later left him to sit for a minute or so at a table between two young Englishmen, who had been making signs to her, and who were in the reassuring company of a magnum.

The minutes passed and she did not return.

Rudd glanced across inquiringly now and then, always to receive an enigmatic expression in return, which might have said, 'Overlook this necessary manœuvre: I will be back with my real friend directly,' and might equally have said, 'No poor man need apply.'

He waited as long as he could endure the place, which had become mechanical, in the hope that the former construction might turn out to be the right one; and then after paying for his simple fare, including an unanticipated charge of five francs for table money, he left, receiving neither a benediction from his waiter nor anything but the curtest of nods from the *maître d'hôtel*.

It was very cold on Montmartre as he descended the hill. The learning of a lesson is often accompanied by chills.

Cabs, however, were still straining up the slope at a gallop, amid whip-crackings like pistol-shots and loud cries from the drivers. Inside were merry revellers bearing every sign that they had brought with them the passport to smiles and fun—enough money.

THE EASTER BONNET

A COMEDY OF A PARCELS LIFT

MISS SELINA LIGHTFOOT TO VIOLETTE ET CIE

Easter Sunday, 1911.

DEAR MADAM,—I am greatly disappointed not to receive the Marie Stuart bonnet which you promised me faithfully should be here on Saturday evening. The result is that I have had to attend church in my old one, thus breaking a habit now many years old of wearing new things on this day. But what troubles me more is your failure to keep your word, for that has never happened before.—Yours truly, SELINA LIGHTFOOT

VIOLETTE ET CIE TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

(*By hand*) *Easter Tuesday.*

DEAR MADAM,—Your letter is very surprising, for our messenger-boy, who brings this, positively assures us that he placed the bonnet in the parcels lift to your flat on Saturday at about 5.30. As the box was too large for the lift he took out the bonnet and wrapped some silver paper round it.—We are, Yours obediently,

VIOLETTE ET CIE

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO VIOLETTE ET CIE

Easter Tuesday.

DEAR MADAM,—I of course accept the word of your messenger. He seems a very nice honest sort of boy, but unfortunately I cannot verify it as I should like to as the lift has stuck in the flat above; and as the occupants—an elderly gentleman and his servant—are away for the Easter holidays we cannot get in to liberate it. If, as I cheerfully believe, the bonnet is in this lift, I will obtain possession of it on their return.—Yours truly,

SELINA LIGHTFOOT

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO MR. BROWELL

(*To await arrival*) *Easter Tuesday.*

Miss Lightfoot presents her compliments to Mr. Browell and begs to draw his attention to the fact that the parcels lift has been stuck in his flat ever since his departure, to the great annoyance and inconvenience of the other tenants. Will he kindly have it put right immediately? If by any chance a parcel in silver paper should be in the lift Miss Lightfoot would be glad to have it.

MR. RUPERT BROWELL TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

Three days later.

Mr. Browell presents his compliments to Miss Light-

foot and begs to say that he exceedingly regrets that the lift should have behaved so inconsiderately during his absence. It is now mended. Mr. Browell has pleasure in sending Miss Lightfoot the silver paper parcel.

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO MR. BROWELL

The same day.

Miss Lightfoot presents her compliments to Mr. Browell and would take it as a favour if he would inform her if the fish which has been occupying the lift for the past five days with her parcel belonged to him.

MR. BROWELL TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

The same day.

Mr. Browell presents his compliments to Miss Lightfoot and begs to state that the fish was a haddock ordered by his housekeeper before she was aware that both he and she were going away for Easter.

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO VIOLETTE ET CIE

The same day.

DEAR MADAM,—I find that, as I anticipated, your boy was quite truthful. The bonnet was in the lift; but by a sad mischance the lift contained also a haddock, which, since it was there some days, has saturated the bonnet with the odour of fish. Do you think anything could be done to put it right, and ought not the owner of the flat above, where all the trouble occurred, to pay for it?—I am, Yours truly, SELINA LIGHTFOOT

VIOLETTE ET CIE TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

The next day.

DEAR MADAM,—If you will send the bonnet we will see what can be done. Probably a new lining will serve.

In any case we agree with you that it is hard that the expense should fall on you.—Yours faithfully,

VIOLETTE ET CIE

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO MR. BROWELL

The same day.

Miss Lightfoot presents her compliments to Mr. Browell and begs to inform him that her bonnet has been rendered unwearable by spending five days in the company of his haddock in a restricted space. Miss Lightfoot would be glad to know what Mr. Browell proposes to do about it.

MR. BROWELL TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

The same day.

Mr. Browell presents his compliments to Miss Lightfoot and greatly regrets that her bonnet has been rendered unwearable, but he suggests that the proper person to approach would be the landlord, who is responsible for the lift being kept in working order. It was not Mr. Browell's purchase of a fish that was irregular, but the failure of the machinery which moves the lift freely up and down.

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO VIOLETTE ET CIE

The same day.

DEAR MADAM,—If, as you think, a new lining will meet the case I agree to that being done; but I know that I shall always feel conscious of the bonnet's aroma, even if it has none, and I shall wear it only in the streets, omnibuses, etc., and never when calling, and never, of course, in church. Please tell me what the cost of the lining will be.—Yours truly,

SELINA LIGHTFOOT

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO MR. BROWELL

Two days later.

Miss Lightfoot presents her compliments to Mr. Browell and begs to inform him that the landlord denies responsibility. According to his letter he is surprised that Mr. Browell should leave his flat for so long with a fish in the lift. Miss Lightfoot has ascertained that a new lining to her bonnet, the least that can be done to it, will cost four shillings, and she begs to suggest that Mr. Browell should discharge this account.

MR. BROWELL TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

The same day.

Mr. Browell presents his compliments to Miss Lightfoot and begs to say that he considers the landlord's reply evasive. At the same time he cannot acquit himself of a certain negligence in the matter of the fish, and he therefore begs that Miss Lightfoot will allow him to defray the cost of a new bonnet and dispense with the injured one altogether.

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO MR. BROWELL

The same day.

Miss Lightfoot presents her compliments to Mr. Browell and begs to thank him for his extreme courtesy in the matter of the bonnet and the fish.

MR. BROWELL TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

A week later.

Mr. Browell presents his compliments to Miss Lightfoot and would like to inquire if she is a 'Patience' player, because if so he would greatly esteem the privilege of calling upon her to explain a very fascinating variety known as 'The king stops the way,' which she possibly may not know and which comes out only once in very many times.

MISS LIGHTFOOT TO MR. BROWELL

November 8, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. BROWELL,—I have done it at last! It came out this evening, absolutely honestly too. I feel prouder than I can say.—Yours sincerely.

SELINA LIGHTFOOT

MR. BROWELL TO MISS LIGHTFOOT

Easter Sunday, 1912.

DEAREST SELINA,—Please accept the accompanying flowers as a reminder of last year's embarrassments and their happy sequel.—Your devoted RUPERT

From *The Times* of *June* 3, 1916

BROWELL: LIGHTFOOT.—On the 2nd June, at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square, by the uncle of the bride, Canon Lightfoot, assisted by the Rev. Morrice Boy Rupert Browell, of Belvedere Mansions, S.W., to Selina Lightfoot, second daughter of the late Major Lightfoot.

THE NOTICE-BOARD

ONCE upon a time there was a family called Morgan: Mr. Morgan the father, Mrs. Morgan the mother, Christopher Morgan, aged twelve, Claire Morgan, aged nine, Betty Morgan, aged seven, a fox-terrier, a cat, a bullfinch, a nurse, a cook, a parlourmaid, a housemaid, and a boy named William. William hardly counts, because he came only for a few hours every day, and then lived almost wholly in the basement, and when he did appear above-stairs it was always in the company of a coal-scuttle. That was the family; and at the time this story begins it had just removed from Bloomsbury to Bayswater.

While the actual moving was going on Christopher Morgan, Claire Morgan, and Betty Morgan, with the dog and the bullfinch, had gone to Sandgate to stay with their grandmother, who, with extraordinary good sense, lived in a house with a garden that ran actually to the beach, so that, although in stormy weather the lawn was covered with pebbles, in fine summer weather you could run from your bedroom into the sea in nothing but a bath-towel or a dressing-gown, or one of those bath-towels which are dressing-gowns. Christopher used to do this, and Claire would have joined him but that the doctor forbade it on account of what he called her defective circulation—two long words which mean cold feet.

When, however, the moving was all done and the new house quite ready, the three children and the dog and the bullfinch returned to London, and getting by great good luck a taxicab at Charing Cross, were whirled to No. 23, Westerham Gardens almost in a minute, at a cost of two-and-eightpence, with fourpence supplement for the luggage. Christopher sat on the front seat, watching the meter all the time, and calling out whenever it had swallowed another twopence. The first eightpence, as you have probably also noticed, goes slowly, but after that the twopences disappear just like sweets.

It is, as you know, a very exciting thing to move to a new house. Everything seems so much better than in the last, especially the cupboards and the wall-papers. In place of the old bell-pulls you find electric bells, and there is a speaking-tube between the dining-room and the kitchen, and the coal-cellar is much larger, and the bath-room has a better arrangement of taps, and you can get hot water on the stairs. But, of course, the electric light is the most exciting thing of all, and it was

so at Westerham Gardens, because in Bloomsbury there had been gas. But Mr. Morgan was exceedingly serious about it, and delivered a lecture on the importance—the vital importance—of always turning off the switch as you leave the room, unless, of course, there is some one in it.

Christopher and Claire and Betty were riotously happy in their new home for some few days, especially as they were so near Kensington Gardens, only a very little way in fact, from the gate where the Dogs' Cemetery is.

And then suddenly they began to miss something. What it was they had no idea; but they knew that in some mysterious way, nice as the new house was, in one respect it was not so nice as the old one. Something was lacking.

It was quite by chance that they discovered what it was; for, being sent one morning to Whiteley's, on their return they entered Westerham Gardens by a new way, and there on a board fixed to the railings of the corner house they read the terrible words:

ORGANS AND STREET CRIES
PROHIBITED

Then they all knew in an instant what it was that had vaguely been troubling them in their new house. It was a house without music—a house that stood in a neighbourhood where there were no bands, no organs, and no costermongers.

'What a horrid shame!' said Claire. And then they began to talk about the organs and bands that used to come to their old home in Bloomsbury.

'Do you remember the Italian woman in the yellow handkerchief on Thursday mornings during French?' said Christopher.

'Yes,' said Betty, 'and the monkey boy with the accordion on Mondays.'

'And the Punch and Judy on Wednesday afternoons,' said Claire.

'And "Fresh wallflowers!" "Nice wallflowers!" at eleven o'clock every day in spring,' said Christopher.

'And the band that always played "Poppies" on Tuesday evenings at bed-time,' said Claire.

'And the organ with the panorama on Friday mornings,' said Betty.

'And the best organ of all, that had one new tune every week, on Saturdays,' said Christopher.

'It must be a great day for the organists when they have a new tune,' said Claire.

'Yes,' said Betty; 'but you have forgotten the funniest of all—the old man with a wooden leg on Tuesday and Friday.'

'But he had only one tune,' said Christopher.

'It was a very nice tune,' said Betty. 'But why I liked him was because he always nodded and smiled at me.'

'That was only his trick,' said Christopher. 'They all do that if they think you have a penny.'

'I don't care,' said Betty stoutly; 'he did it as if he meant it.'

That night, just after Claire had undressed, Christopher came in and sat on her bed. 'I've got an idea,' he said. 'Let's have a new notice-board painted with

ORGANS AND STREET CRIES
INVITED

on it, and have it fixed on our railings. Then we shall get some music again. I reckon that Mr. Randall's

son would make it just like the other for about four shillings, and that 's what we 've got.'

Mr. Randall's son was the family carpenter, and he was called that because his father had been the family carpenter before him for many years. When his father, Mr. Randall, was alive, the son had no name, but was always referred to as Mr. Randall's son, and now, although the old man was dead, he was still spoken of in that way, although he was a man of fifty and had sons of his own.

Mr. Randall's son smiled when he was asked if he could and would make a notice-board. ' I will, Master Christopher,' he said; ' but I 'm thinking you had better spend your money on something else. A nice boat, now, for the Round Pond. Or a pair of stilts—I could make you a pair of stilts in about an hour.' Poor Christopher looked wistful, and then bravely said that he would rather have the notice-board. After giving careful instructions as to the style of painting the words, he impressed upon Mr. Randall's son the importance of wrapping the board very carefully in paper when he brought it back, because it was a surprise.

' A surprise ! ' said Mr. Randall's son with a great hearty laugh; ' I should think it will be a surprise to some of 'em. I 'd like to be there to see the copper's face when he reads it.'

Mr. Randall's son was not there to see the copper's face; but the copper—by which Mr. Randall's son meant the policeman—did read it in the company of about forty other persons, chiefly errand-boys and cabmen, in front of the Morgans' house on the morning after Christopher had skilfully fixed it to the area railings; and having read it he walked off quickly to the nearest police-station to take advice.

The result was that just as Mr. Morgan was leaving

for the City the policeman knocked at the door and asked to see him.

Mr. Morgan soon afterwards came from the study and showed the policeman out, and then he sent for Christopher. After Christopher had confessed, 'My dear boy,' he said, 'this won't do at all. That notice-board at the end of this street means either that the owners of Westerham Gardens or a large number of the tenants wish the neighbourhood to be free from street music. If we, who are new-comers, set up notice-boards to a contrary effect, we are doing a very rude and improper thing. I quite understand that you miss the organs that we used to have, but the only way to get them back would be to obtain the permission of every one in the Gardens; and that, of course, is absurd.' With these words, which he afterwards wished he had never used, Mr. Morgan hurried off to the nearest Tube to make money in the City, which was how he spent his days.

Christopher carried the news to Claire, who at once said, 'Then we must go to every house to get leave.'

'Of course,' said Christopher. 'How ripping!'

And they started immediately.

It would take too long to tell you how they got on at each house. From some they were sent away; at others they met with sympathy.

Their words to the servant who opened the door were: 'Please give your mistress the compliments of No. 23, and ask if she really wants street music to be prohibited.'

'Of course we don't, my dears,' said an old lady at No. 14. 'We should love to have a nice pianoforte organ every now and then, or even a band; but it would never do to say so. Every one is so select about here. Why, in that house opposite lives the widow of a Lord Mayor.'

Claire made a note of the number to tell Betty, who loved rank and grandeur, and then they ascended the next steps, where they found the most useful person of all, a gentleman who came down to see them, smoking a pipe and wearing carpet slippers. 'In reply to your question,' he said, 'I should welcome street music; but the matter has nothing to do either with me or with you. It is all settled by the old lady at the corner, the house to which the notice-board is fixed. It is she who owns the property, and it is she who stops the organs. If you want to do any good you must see her. Her name is Miss Seaton, and as you will want a little cake and lemonade to give you strength for the interview, you had better come in here for a moment.' So saying he led them into the dining-room, which was hung with coloured pictures of hunting and racing, and made them very comfortable, and then sent them off with best wishes for good luck.

Telling Claire to wait a moment, Christopher ran off to their own house for the board, and returned quickly with it wrapped up under his arm. He rang the bell of the corner house boldly, and then, seeing a notice which ran, 'Do not knock unless an answer is required,' knocked boldly too. It was opened by an elderly butler. 'Please tell Miss Seaton that Mr. and Miss Morgan from No. 23 would like to see her,' said Christopher.

'On what business?' asked the butler.

'On important business to Westerham Gardens,' said Christopher.

'Wait here a moment,' said the butler, and creaked slowly upstairs. 'Here' was the hall, and they sat on a polished mahogany form, with a little wooden roller at each end, exactly opposite a stuffed dancing bear with his arms hungry for umbrellas. Upstairs they heard a door

open and a muttered conversation, and then the door shut and the butler creaked slowly down again.

'Will you come this way?' he said, and creaked slowly up once more, followed by the children, who had great difficulty in finding the steps at that pace, and showed them into a room in which was sitting an old lady in a high-backed arm-chair near the fire. On the hearthrug were five cats, and there was one in her lap and one on the table. 'Oh!' thought Claire, 'if only Betty were here!' For Betty not only loved rank and grandeur but adored cats.

'Well,' said the old lady, 'what is it?'

'If you please,' said Christopher, 'we have come about the notice-board outside, which says, "Organs and street cries prohibited."'

'Yes,' Claire broke in; 'you see, we have just moved to No. 23, and at our old home—in Bloomsbury, you know—there was such a lot of music, and a Punch and Judy, and there 's none here, and we wondered if it really meant it.'

'Because,' Christopher went on, 'it seemed to us that this notice-board'—and here he unwrapped the new one—'could just as easily be put up as the one you have. We had it made on purpose.' And he held it up before Miss Seaton's astonished eyes.

'"Organs and street cries *invited!*"' she exclaimed. 'Why, I never heard such a thing in my life. They drive me frantic.'

'Couldn't you put cotton-wool in your ears?' Claire asked.

'Or ask them to move a little farther on—nearer No. 23?' said Christopher.

'But, my dear children,' said the old lady, 'you really are very wilful. I hope your father and mother don't know what you are doing.'

'No,' said Christopher.

'Well, sit down, both of you,' said Miss Seaton, 'and let us talk it over.' So they sat down, and Claire took up one of the cats and stroked it behind the ears, and Miss Seaton asked them a number of questions.

After a while she rang the bell for the butler, who creaked in and out and then in again with cake and a rather good syrup to mix with water; and they gradually became friendly, not only with Miss Seaton, but with each of the cats in turn.

'Are there any more?' Claire asked.

'No, only seven,' said Miss Seaton. 'I never have more and I never have fewer.'

'Do you give them all names?' said Claire.

'Of course,' said Miss Seaton. 'That is partly why there are only seven. I name them after the days of the week.'

'Oh!' thought Claire again, 'if only Betty were here!'

'The black one there, with the white front, is Sunday,' Miss Seaton continued. 'That all black one is Monday —black Monday, you know. The tortoiseshell is Friday. The sandy one is Saturday.'

'It was on Saturday,' said Christopher, 'that the best organ of all used to come, the one with a new tune every week.'

'The blue Persian is Wednesday,' said Miss Seaton, not taking any notice of his remark. 'The white Persian is Tuesday, and the grey Iceland cat is Thursday. And now,' she added, 'you must go home, and I will think over your request and let you have the answer.'

That evening, just after the children had finished their supper, a ring came at the door, followed, after it was opened, by scuffling feet and a mysterious thud.

Then the front door banged, and Annie the maid came in to say that there was a heavy box in the hall, addressed to Master and Miss Morgan. The children tore out, and found a large case with, just as Annie had said, Christopher and Claire's name upon it. Christopher rushed off for a hammer and screwdriver, and in a few minutes the case was opened. Inside was a note and a very weighty square thing in brown paper. Christopher began to undo the paper, while Claire read the note aloud:

"1, WESTERHAM GARDENS, W.

'DEAR MISS AND MASTER MORGAN,—I have been thinking about your request all the afternoon, as I promised I would, and have been compelled to decide against it in the interests not only of the property but of several of my old tenants, whose nerves cannot bear noise. But as I feel that your father, when he made inquiries about your new house, was not sufficiently informed as to the want of entertainment in the neighbourhood, I wish to make it up in so far as I can to you all for your disappointment, and therefore beg your acceptance of a musical box which was a great pleasure to me when I was much younger, and may, I trust, do something to amuse you, although the tunes are, I fear, not of the newest.—Believe me yours sincerely,

'VICTORIA SEATON'

'There, father,' said Christopher, 'you see she wasn't really cross at all.'

'No,' said Mr. Morgan; 'but, all the same, this must be the last of such escapades.'

Then he opened the musical box, and they found from the piece of paper inside the lid, written in violet ink in a thin, upright, rather curly foreign hand, that it had twelve tunes. Mr. Morgan wound it up, and they

all stood round watching the great brass barrel, with the little spikes on it, slowly revolve, while the teeth of the comb were caught up one by one by the spikes to make the notes. There was also a little drum and a peal of silver bells. Although old, it was in excellent order, and very gentle and ripply in tone; and I wish I had been there too, for it is a long time since I heard a musical box, every one now having gramophones with sore throats.

The first tune was 'The Last Rose of Summer' and the second the beautiful prison song from 'Il Trovatore.' When it came to the seventh the children looked at each other and smiled.

'Why,' said Betty, 'that 's the tune the nice man with the wooden leg on Tuesdays and Fridays always played.'

And what do you think it was? It was 'Home, sweet Home.'

THE CRICKET MATCH[1]

(SOMEWHAT IN THE HOMERIC MANNER OF MESSRS. LANG, LEAF, AND MYERS)

I

The Argument

SING, Muse, of the battle royal waged between those ancient enemies, the men of windy Heatherhill and sweet-smelling Jasmine Hollow, on that never-to-be-forgotten day of hot summer, and bid thy song pierce the breasts of all cricketers good and true.

[1] I include, in 1916, this early effort in the thought that readers may like to be reminded of a great game that used to be played in the happy days long ago, before ambition laid waste the world.

II

How Dillaway awakened early

Rosy-fingered Dawn smiled early on the earth that morning; but already at his window was hard-smiting Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow. While it was yet night he rose from his bed and pushed aside the honeysuckle from about the window and stretched out his head into the keen air; and when he saw the eastern sky flush red he was glad, for he knew that the great sun presently would shine.

III

How Dillaway girt himself

In the morning he made himself ready for the fray, donning flannels white and cool, and white boots armed with steel spikes, and a blazer of brilliant hues, purple and crimson and gold. And on his head he set a wide-brimmed hat, brought hither from sultry Panama, whose weight was no more than the foam-crest that rides upon the salt wave. Then did the hard-smiter look carefully to his bats, choosing at length one that had been well tried and was bound about the splice and blade with waxed thread betokening ancient virtue. Yea, in its time busy had this same bat kept the fingers of the scorers. This with pads and gloves he flung into his bag.

IV

Of the Field of Battle

Then strode Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, to the field of battle, which was called Three Elms Mead. Now Three Elms Mead was carpeted with green grass and soft, wherefrom yellow-eyed daisies did shyly peep, and

around the edges of it were leafy trees, and a little way within stood the three elms which gave it its name. Above was the blue sky, and the warm air throbbed with the song of joyous birds, the high-soaring lark and the thrush of the dappled breast. On a square space in the midst of the mead the grass was shorter than elsewhere, and here were the wickets pitched, at each end three ashen stumps with tips of brass. And behind each set of three, at the confines of the mead, was a wall of canvas to aid the batsman in his sight of the flying ball.

V

Of the Perplexity of Dillaway

Between the wickets did hard-smiting Dillaway pace, knitting his brows in thought as he pressed the yielding turf with his white-shod feet, for the rain of yesterday had made soft the soil, and he was torn in mind as to whether the advantage would be with them who batted first, or them that fielded. But now, seeing his comrades drawing near along the road, he went to meet them, and led them to the field to hold a council of war. So stood they around him, with their eyes fixed on the turf, pondering deeply.

VI

Of the Eleven of Jasmine Hollow

And these are the cricketers of Jasmine Hollow that stood around their captain, hard-smiting Dillaway: sun-bronzed Langley, goodly and tall, and Argleson of the mountainous biceps, and Guy Raven of the swift shooters that dart as a swallow for speed. No higher man was there in all Jasmine Hollow than Guy Raven. Seventy and eight inches was he in height, and he could fling the

ball full a hundred and ten yards. And when he bowled, the ball left his hand the length of his own stature behind the ashen stumps; from here after a quick run he delivered the ball, lest he should put in only full-pitchers, and so be swiped for four. Hard is it for any bowler to be swiped often for four. And with Guy Raven came his brother, Verney Raven of the curling slows, and left-handed Romilly, and fleet-footed Oliver, and slogger Farnham of the eagle eye, whose joy it was to run to meet the flying ball, and Eustace of the off-break, who was skilled in all ways of guile and cunning device. Whenever Eustace, full of wiles, took the ball, then could no man say of what kind would the next be, whether fast or slow, long-hop or half-volley; and well it behoved the batsman to be upon his guard. But most was he famed for a slow yorker tossed high in the air that dropped idly into the block beneath the batsman's blade, even as the furry rabbit slips into its burrow, and then darting to the brass-pointed stumps, laid low the bails. And the other warriors of Jasmine Hollow were Allingham, that long-legged one, and Warwick, dauntless wicket-keep.

VII

How Billy Ram offered Counsel

These stood around their captain proffering counsel; but whereas one deemed it wiser to go in, another advised the taking of the field. In sore doubt was hard-hitting Dillaway until he saw coming across the daisy-pied turf old Billy Ram, the Jasmine Hollow umpire. Him eagerly he hailed, for Billy Ram had seen many years, and sage was his tongue, and in his youth he had been a mighty man among cricketers. Now Billy Ram, that aged man, divined their trouble and spake winged words to them, saying: 'I remember a match on this

very ground in days long ago, since when a whole generation of men has passed away. Yesterday's rain had given the turf just such a softness, so that our captain put the foe in first, thinking, rash man, soon to prove their ruin. But they held the wicket for nigh four hours and made two hundred runs, whereas our score was but a sorry sixty. Carpenter of Cambridge was with them, and thrice did he hit me to leg into the road. Therefore if you overcome the men of Heatherhill in the toss, do not put them in.' So spake he, Billy Ram, the veteran, and hard-smiting Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, resolved to abide by his advice.

VIII

Of the Eleven of Heatherhill

Then brake the council of war ; and the eleven, bringing bats and balls, practised among themselves, that their eyes might be subdued to the strong light and their limbs freed of stiffness, until was heard the sound of wheels and the beating upon the road of the hoofs of high-stepping horses, and the eleven of windy Heatherhill drave into Three Elms Mead in a tall brake. Them did Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, meet and greet. And these are the warriors that saluted him : Bullamore of the mighty shoulders, captain of windy Heatherhill and prince among men, and lob-bowler Redfern, and Ommaney, bane of batsmen, and far-flinging Ellaby, hero of the out-field, whose joy it was by speed of foot and might of arm to make the four into three and the three into two. There was no spot in all the mead from whence far-flinging Ellaby could not hit the ashen stumps, and when he ran along the boundary the earth shook as when whole-hooved horses contend in the race with thunderous and stemless onset. These

also did Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, greet: Lorimer of the bleached moustache, and run-stealing Corrie, and Mornington the stonewaller, bane of bowlers, and safe-catching Honeywood, whose hands were as a leathern bowl from which a ball once dropped therein never leaped out, and Sidney of the well-worn gloves, and curly-headed Douglas, youngest of the cricketers, full of pride to be among men and heroes. Never before had he played save in school matches. Little sleep had curly-headed Douglas the night before, thinking of the hundred he would make this day. Lastly came little Romney, who reached no higher than the elbow of Bullamore of the mighty shoulders, the dear comrade of lob-bowler Redfern. These twain played together with much cunning; for when Redfern took the ball, then would little Romney stand at short square-leg behind the broad back of the umpire, so that the batsman ranging the field with bright eyes seeking undefended spots might overlook him. Then would Redfern put in a tempting lob, such as the batsman might with safety place to leg for two, deeming none there to catch or speed it back; when from behind the umpire would spring little Romney and seize the ball with eager fingers ere it touched the green earth. Thus were many of the foes of windy Heatherhill brought to dusty death. And with the eleven of windy Heatherhill came Phil Gladlee as umpire; and both teams were radiant in white flannel.

IX

Of the Gallant Spectacle

Truly a brave sight was Three Elms Mead at that time. The great sun climbing the sky shed kindling beams on those two-and-twenty Englishmen, young and mighty and fresh, and glad with thought of the coming fray.

For glorious is it to have youth and strength, and a brow whereon the hand of cruel Care has never pressed; glorious is it to turn one's face upwards to the great sun.

X

Of the Toss

Now all being prepared, the two captains, hard-smiting Dillaway and Bullamore of the mighty shoulders, strode to the pitch; and there did Dillaway draw from his pocket a coin of burnished bronze and spin it high into the air. And as he did so, Bullamore spake a winged word. 'Heads!' he cried; but when the coin fell it was the other side, even tails, which was uppermost. Whereupon Dillaway, remembering the counsel of Billy Ram, the umpire, said, 'We will bat.'

XI

Of the Beginning of the Fray

Then Bullamore of the mighty shoulders called together his comrades dear and ranged them about the field; but to Ommaney, bane of batsmen, he gave the red ball. And the umpires twain, Billy Ram, that aged man, and Phil Gladlee, clad in coats of calico white as the snow on the summit of Ida, walked to the pitch, and following them came hard-smiting Dillaway and Langley of the sunburned skin. And the legs of these warriors were girt about with pads of cane and leather, and upon their brown hands were gloves of leather and rubber, that the flying ball striking these instead of the bat might do them no hurt; and each man grasped a shining bat, the handle whereof was of many pieces of cane deftly welded and bound with black thread and the blade whereof was of seasoned willow that long had lain beneath the foster-

ing eye of the cunning maker of bats. To the northern stumps strode Dillaway, and to the southern end, near which stood Ommaney, bane of batsmen, grasping in glad hands the red ball, did Langley stride. Then Bullamore of the mighty shoulders, the captain of windy Heatherhill, looked narrowly round, and gently motioning with his hand he moulded the field nearer his desire, drawing this man more nigh and waving that one farther into the country. Now all being ready Phil Gladlee, the umpire, spake a winged word. 'Play!' he cried. So the match began.

XII

Of the Score of Jasmine Hollow

And when, after the great sun had sailed two hours from noon on its voyage to the west, the wicket of the last man fell, lowered by a shooter from Ommaney, bane of batsmen, the score of Jasmine Hollow was two hundred and ten. Of these hard-smiting Dillaway made fifty and two, whereof thirty and six were in fours; ay, nine times drave he the ball to the distant hedge ere Ommaney, bane of batsmen, overcame him with a fast yorker. And Farnham of the eagle eye made half an hundred, but in the end little Romney snapped him at short-leg off a cunning lob from Redfern, his dear comrade. And two score was the tale of runs made by Argleson of the mountainous biceps ere far-flinging Ellaby threw down his wicket even from the extremest boundary. Once only the ball touched the earth after it left that stalwart one's strong arm, therefrom leaping to the polished bails with renewed vigour, even as Antæus rose again from the cool soil braced in muscle and nerve. Twenty and one did left-handed Romilly make, and Eustace of the off-break twenty and three. These did bravely, but ill was it

with fleet-footed Oliver and Verney Raven of the curling slows, for Ommaney, bane of batsmen, gat them with first balls, while Warwick, dauntless wicket-keep, only just brake his duck.

XIII

Of the Luncheon of the Warriors

Now for a season all thoughts of cricket went from the hearts of these warriors, for within the white tent was goodly cheer, and much running had filled them with a great hunger. Therefore Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, led the way to the tent, and the others followed him as sheep follow their leader from the water to the pasture. Here upon a long table was laid a cloth of the whiteness of a cloud in the sky of April, and upon the cloth were lordly viands. Red beef was there, cut from the sides of oxen that graze in the lush grass of Berkshire meadows, watered by slow-gliding Thames; and there the flesh of lambs that crop sweet herbage from the high round hills of Sussex; and within generous dishes were pies fashioned of wheaten crust and the flesh of pigeons. Giant bowls of salad stood between the meats, wherein were mixed toothsome roots and leaves, crisp lettuce and endive with a bitter savour, cool dew-fed cucumber and radishes that sting the tongue, wit-imparting onions and beetroot crimson as with the blood of heroes. And good store was there of bread, and ale in foaming tankards whose depths burned with amber light—ale of most notable integrity. And the cricketers made libation.

XIV

Of the Bystanders

Then when all were filled, some drew from their pockets pipes of briarwood and pouches of tobacco, and

made burnt-offering to the goddess Nicotina, daughter of Zeus. For now all about the white tent were gathered many people, come hither from Jasmine Hollow and windy Heatherhill : young men and old men and maidens, the squire in his carriage and the vicar in his pony cart. Gay were the maidens in hats of straw garnished with ribbons, and their frocks were of bright colours even as the bow which spans the sky when welcome sunlight strikes against the summer shower. Among the old men were Harry Bull, who would grasp his oaken staff to show how Fuller Pilch held his bat, and Solly Biggers, oracle of Jasmine Hollow : in their mouths were pipes of clay, and they rested their hands on their sticks and their chins on their hands, and between their feet were flagons of ale.

XV

Of Dillaway's Brave Thoughts

Now was it high time for Jasmine Hollow to take the field while Heatherhill batted, for three hours had sped by since noon, and three only were left ere the drawing of stumps. In the breast of Dillaway the heart of him thumped mightily : as a tawny lion snared in the jungle by night leapeth against the walls of the pit, so beat the heart of Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow ; for because he was sportsman right to the marrow, and because last year the victory was with Heatherhill,— for these twain reasons he desired that Jasmine Hollow should this day make famous conquest of their ancient foe.

XVI

Of the Brave Thoughts of Bullamore

Not less eager was Bullamore of the mighty shoulders, captain of windy Heatherhill, for it was in his mind that

runs must come full speedily if the score of their enemy was to be passed. Therefore spake he winged words to his team. 'Play up for your lives,' he said, and a fine rapture stirred within them.

XVII

How Dillaway waxed scornful

Forthwith hard-smiting Dillaway called together the men of Jasmine Hollow to join him in the field, but full loth were sun-bronzed Langley and Argleson of the mountainous biceps to leave the honeyed words of two laughter-loving maidens. Not until their captain had thrice called them did they depart. Therefore was the hard smiter sore wrathful, and with scornful words he upbraided them:

'Weak cricketers that ye are, is this the season for the soft ways of women? Do ye not mark that the sun is already racing to the west and the time is short, and among our foes is Mornington the stonewaller, bane of bowlers, he that has made too many matches into draws? Sweep from your minds all thought of love till the game is done and glorious victory is with us.' Thus spake he, and they were ashamed.

XVIII

Of the Fall of Little Romney

Now came from the tent goodly Mornington the stonewaller, and little Romney, girt about with pads and gloves, and Romney walked to the southern stumps to take the first over. When he had given him his middle, Phil Gladlee, the umpire, stood aside, and Guy Raven plunged along, swinging his arms as swing the branches of an elm stirred and tossed by the wind of the western sea, and sent in a ball terrible and swift. Straightway

fear loosened the knees of little Romney, for in his heart he knew that it would get him, and he played at it gropingly as a blind man, so that the sharp crack of smitten wickets knelled in his ears, and from all parts of the mead arose a roar like unto the waves of the angry Atlantic booming against the rocky coast of Galway. Whereupon little Romney faltered back to the tent, wishing wishes twain—one for an underground passage and one that he had never been born. And the men of Jasmine Hollow were flushed with joy, and running to the wickets they dealt unto Guy Raven the thump of approval.

XIX

How Bullamore Filled the Breach

But now came with great strides godlike Bullamore; seventy and two inches high was he, and no harbourage gave he to fear for any bowling, fast or slow. Again did Guy Raven plunge forward swinging long arms, but this time the ball was cut for one. So did Heatherhill open the score and begin the fight in real earnest.

XX

Of the Dismay of Luckless Romilly

And full sixty minutes sped by ere the defence of either batsman was overcome, even though many bowlers were tried, Guy Raven of the swift shooters, and Verney Raven of the curling slows, and Eustace full of wiles, and Argleson of the mountainous biceps, and Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, who went on with lobs, and set his men about the confines of the mead that high catches might be smitten into their eager hands. But vain were all their pains: Mornington was cautious, even as the red fox that comes in the night to carry away the chickens of the farmer's wife, while Bullamore of the

mighty shoulders smote only where men were not. Meanwhile their comrades dear in the tent shouted to them winged words of cheer, as the nimble fingers of the scorers set down run upon run. Sore discomfited were the men of Jasmine Hollow one and all; but most was left-handed Romilly discomfited, standing at mid-on, for thrice did Bullamore open his shoulders and smite the ball head-high to the luckless one with the speed of a falcon on the mountains swooping after a trembling dove, and thrice Romilly held his hands aloft and made to hold the ball, but each time the force of it overcame him. And at the third essay he wished the gift of life had never been his, for verily a butter-fingers is lowest of men.

XXI

How Allingham Mourned the Swallow

Not till the end of days will it be forgotten of Bullamore that he smote one ball with such might that it slew a swallow skimming the outskirts of the mead. This ill-starred feathered thing Allingham picked up, and thus he spake to it, holding it tenderly in his broad hands:

'*Never again, little friend with the white breast, wilt thou leave thy southern home, and, spreading pointed wings, sweep the seas, bringing to us tidings of the joy of summer; never more wilt thou lodge beneath our eaves thy hollow nest of mud, whereby the gods are bidden to hold dear all them that dwell within the house.*'

So spake he, for grief came upon him.

XXII

Of Bullamore's Herculean Drive

Yet another hit that long kept busy the tongues of men was made by godlike Bullamore ere defeat came upon

him. Weary was Eustace with much bowling, and as he made himself up to deliver the fourth ball of the over, fatigue took hold of his arm and he tossed a full pitch. With a fierce joy Bullamore thrust forward his left foot and opened his shoulders, and swinging his bat, even as Hercules, son of Zeus, swung his club when he fought with and overcame the Lernæan hydra, he gat under the leather with the thick of the blade and sent it soaring high into the blue over the tent, even as a gull soars over the white cliff. Straightway the hundred went up, and cheer on cheer clave the air, for goodly Bullamore had done a great deed not lightly to be esteemed. Harry Bull watched the ball with glad eyes. 'Ay,' said he, 'twas a grand hit! Alfred Mynn could't ha' done better, and as for Fuller Pilch, he never made such a stroke in his life, though, mark 'ee, he had more style.' So spake he, that aged man, between puffs at his pipe of clay.

XXIII

Of Bullamore's Discomfiture

Now, when the ball came again to the hands of Eustace, and the field was made ready, wearily, as a man who has all day borne the heat of the sun and is now dispirited and sick, even so did Eustace run to the wicket and deliver the ball, bowling it full high. Bullamore of the mighty shoulders, seeing its approach, deemed himself to be again the favourite of kind fortune, and made to greet yet another full-pitch and smite it as he had smitten that other; for the guile of Eustace full of wiles was hidden from him. But as he swung his bat the ball dropped of a sudden an inch from the blade's end and darted upon the hero's stumps, laying low the polished bails. So Bullamore gat his death, having made seventy

and eight, and dire grief darkened his inmost soul as he stripped off his pads, for he had hoped to reach the hundred. The fieldsmen laid themselves flat in the grass to taste sweet relief from pursuing the flying ball, while Dillaway spake winged words to Eustace in praise of his yorker.

XXIV

How Dillaway Heartened his Men

Now in the space betwixt the going of Bullamore and the coming of Lorimer of the bleached moustache, Dillaway, captain of Jasmine Hollow, passed among his comrades speaking winged words:

'Time is fleeting, and already have our enemies one hundred runs for only two wickets, and they now need but one hundred and eleven runs to wrest glad victory from us. Eight men must we yet overcome, and among them are Mornington the stonewaller, bane of bowlers, and Redfern, and far-flinging Ellaby: all good men and perilous. Therefore pull we now ourselves together, that the fame of sweet-smelling Jasmine Hollow may still be unblemished by defeat.' So spake godlike Dillaway, that hard smiter, and courage sang in the blood of his team.

XXV

How Redfern was Overcome

And kind fortune smiled upon them, for not long had Lorimer faced the bowlers ere fleet-footed Oliver, running along the boundary, caught him low down with one hand, such a catch as one may live years and never see. Next strode to the pitch Ommaney, bane of batsmen, but no bane of bowlers was he; and a swift from Guy Raven proved his ruin, driving the middle stump out of the

ground so that its brazen point flamed in the slanting sun. Nor did Redfern, bowler of lobs, stay long, albeit he had great fame as a hitter. To him did Dillaway toss a wily screw such as a man fondly deems he can send even above the high elms. Redfern, rash youth, ran forth to hit, but the ball brake and he missed it, whereupon Warwick, the wicket-keep, pounced, even as a sandy cat pounces upon a mouse in the straw-yard, and stumped him. Lightly may no man run out to a wily screw. Back went Redfern, bowler of lobs, tugging pitifully at his gloves, and the scoring-board proclaimed the glad tidings: five for one hundred and forty-three. And the spirits of Jasmine Hollow leaped higher, for half the side were out and nigh seventy runs must be made ere windy Heatherbill could claim the prize.

XXVI

How Ellaby Forgot Prudence

Albeit Fate had willed it that the prowess of stalwart Ellaby should fill them yet with dismay; with bat held high above his head that far-flinging one awaited the coming of the ball, and when it came small work was there for Warwick, dauntless wicket-keep. No power had Dillaway's screws now; nor could the cunning of Eustace, full of wiles, outwit the cunning of the bat. On all sides did Ellaby hit, now crashing on the ball when it had passed the stumps and was almost in the hands of Warwick, speeding it fast between slip and third man; now lifting it over the head of long-leg; now driving it along the daisy-pied turf to the distant hedge behind the bowler. Meanwhile, Mornington was not idle, but mighty hitting he could not do, and therefore was content gently to place the ball where fieldsmen were not and steal rapid runs. And sorely were the fieldsmen discomfited, for

the score was swelling even as swells a river in the time of floods when dark clouds ride near the earth. But at last Verney Raven brought about the downfall of Ellaby with a curling slow. This the far-flinging one leaped forth to smite, but he forgot the spin, and straightway the ball shot upwards from the bat's blade and was held in a moment's space between the broad palms of Argleson standing at point. So departed Ellaby, having added thirty and six to the score ; and right thankful were the weary men of Jasmine Hollow, for in shamelessness of pulling none might in any wise strive with Ellaby, and Panic, dear son of Ares, had begun to have sway over their hearts.

XXVII

How Dillaway again Spurred his Team

Then Dillaway, the hard smiter, passed again among them, speaking winged words : ' Know ye that our foes have now but a poor score of runs to make to wrest glad victory from us ? And still are there four wickets to fall ; let us then tighten our sinews, lest now indeed the day doth shine that shall see us conquered by the men of Heatherhill.' So spake he, and they strode back to their places refreshed anew.

XXVIII

How the Second Hundred was Reached

Of small avail were Corrie, stealer of runs, and curly-headed Douglas. Corrie stole no runs that day, for he lost the sight of a long-hop from Guy Raven, and it clicked against the stumps with a sound that was music to the ears of Jasmine Hollow ; and Douglas, albeit he lived through nine overs, made none of those hits which had covered him with such glory in the fields of sleep.

Nor stayed long at the wickets Sidney of the well-worn gloves, although, hitting at a venture, he twice smote the red ball beyond the boundaries, thereby sending up the second hundred. Cheers sounded from the tent, filling the hearts of Jasmine Hollow with dismay; yet not long were they in doubt, for Sidney slid his leg before a straight ball, and Billy Ram, the umpire, bade him back to the tent.

Now was the score of Heatherhill two hundred for nine wickets: but one wicket was there to fall, and eleven runs to get ere glad victory was with them; and short time was there to get these in, for the sun burnt low in the western sky. Mornington, the stonewaller, bane of bowlers, still held his ground, and to bear him company came safe-catching Honeywood, fearful at heart, knowing that in him, an unsure bat, were all hopes fixed. God-like Bullamore, captain of Heatherhill, spake winged words to him ere he left the tent, bidding him take no risks in hitting, but play with all care that the match might be made a draw, and shameful defeat averted from the windy village. So came the last man, and all the field was stirred to new endeavour, and they who looked on dared speak no words, so pressing was their fear lest victory should depart from Jasmine Hollow.

XXIX

Of the Keenness of Jasmine Hollow

Yet one ball was there of the over, and that rushed past Honeywood like a thunderbolt. Then Dillaway flung the ball to Verney Raven of the curling slows, who, full of guile, tempted Mornington to run out and hit and so end the match. But Ida's self is not more firmly established in the earth than was the bane of bowlers. The first ball he let pass; the next he placed to leg for

two ; the third also he let pass, lest the hands of sun-bronzed Langley at cover should prove his fall ; the fourth he cut for two more ; and from the last he made a single, thereby gaining the other end. Joyful of heart was safe-catching Honeywood as he coursed away from that dread spot. Dillaway now took the ball and moulded the field with nice care. The first ball Mornington drave back hard for two and was again at that end ; the next he played to square-leg, thinking to run two more, but fleet-footed Oliver, speeding up even as whole-hooved horses that contend in the race, so swiftly flung in the ball that the batsmen crossed but once.

XXX

How Allingham made a Great Catch

Now was it Honeywood's turn to bat, and a thrill shook the field. The first ball, being the third of the over, pitched wide of the stumps and brake away, and Honeywood, remembering the counsel of his captain, made no effort to hit it. The next was straight, and this he blocked, albeit sorely tempted to drive it afar. The third, being the last of the over, flew with all gentleness above the pitch, and though in the heart of Honeywood was the purpose to do no slogging, yet hard is it to withstand a gently flying ball. Moreover himseemed that if he could smite the ball for four beyond the uttermost fieldsman, then would the match be won, and grand it would be for him to be the hero of Heatherhill by making such a hit. Straightway, therefore, he leaped to meet it and drive it afar, even as a striped tiger that long has known hunger leaps from his hiding-place in the bushes upon the deer trotting all unwary towards grievous death. The bat of Honeywood shone like the scales of a salmon, and just where the blade is thickest, four inches from the

foot, there it smote the ball. Fast towards the sun the ball soared higher and higher, and then swooped to earth again, while beneath it, by the distant hedge, stood Allingham in dread suspense, his eyes fixed on the fleeting speck and his hands outreached to hold it. Meanwhile, between the wicket ran Mornington and Honeywood, and every heart stood still. Steadfast, Allingham moved not; nothing of him moved save his eyes following the flight of the nearing ball, until it rested, birdlike, betwixt his broad palms.

XXXI

How Victory fell to Jasmine Hollow

Then uprose a mighty shout, for the men of Heatherhill were beaten by one run.

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